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A DISCOURSE OF Divine Assistance, AND THE METHOD thereof:

Shewing what Assistance Men receive from God in performing the Condition of the Promise of pardon of Sin and Eternal Life.

By *William Allen*

Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Mat. 13. 12. *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.*

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

MUch indeed hath been written of the Divine Assistance in parts, and upon occasion of handling other doctrines, such as Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, &c. But yet I cannot say that much hath been done by any entire and set Discourse upon this Subject, especially not upon Gods preventing grace and preparatory assistance; which yet is one branch of the whole, and

hugely neceſſary to be well underſtood and conſidered. Upon which account I cannot but think that ſomething further of this nature, though but vulgarly done, may be of good uſe to Vulgar capacities, who can better underſtand this great Doctrine when they ſee the parts put together, and how they relate to, and depend one upon another, than otherwiſe they can.

And therefore the better to prepare the Reader for the enſuing Diſcourſe, I ſhall inſtance in ſome few things, to ſhew the uſefulneſs of a clear and diſtinct underſtanding of the Nature and Method of Divine Aſſiſtance, and the terms on which it may be expected.

And firſt touching the Method *of Gods aſſiſtance. It is endeavoured in the following Diſcourſe to ſhew, that God by his preventing grace uſually begins with men, in aſſiſting them towards performance of the condition of the promiſe, by raiſing in them a ſenſe of their guilt and danger, and by awakening*

kening their fear; and all to stir them up to apply themselves to the remedy. For Fear being a most powerful principle and spring of Action, when any thing strong, will, if any thing will, put them upon endeavours to provide for their own safety. But if men be ignorant and unacquainted with this Method of Gods assistance, they will be in much danger of taking these first operations of God upon their minds, to be but like other thoughts which come and go there, without being much taken notice of: or else but for a fit of Melancholy, to be withstood and striven against; and so unawares they may quench the Spirit under the notion of removing Melancholy thoughts. Whereas if they were made sensible of the Nature of Gods Preparatory Assistance, they would probably be more afraid to slight such working of their thoughts, lest in doing so they should slight the warning of God himself, and the safety of their own souls.

The knowledge of this Method of Gods Assistance, serves also to direct those who labour the conversion of souls, and to help on the Work of Repentance in men, frequently to inculcate upon the minds of Unreformed Sinners, such arguments and considerations as are apt and proper to make them sensible of their guilt and danger, and to awaken their fears. For when by their doing so, these applications from without by the Word, meet with Gods applications to the mind by his Spirit within, the operation will be so much the more powerful, and the more likely to prevail.

And because men are too apt to discharge themselves of such fears as much as they can, by some vain and delusive reasonings in their minds: and because a resolution to become new men hereafter, though they delay it for the present, is one of them; therefore to prevent this, the greatness of the folly, and the greatness of the danger of such a delay, should be strenuously urged upon them,

them, as a Folly so great, that the folly of those that see their whole Estates, or their Lives in apparent danger, and yet do not make all the haste they can to secure them, is no folly in comparison of this. For they are not onely in danger thereby of being eternally lost, by being snatched away under such a delay, but also of being deprived of all Divine Assistance for the future, although they should live never so long. For from him that hath not (i. e. *hath not used that which he first had*) shall be taken away that which he hath, *saith our Saviour.*

Bad men are apt to flatter and deceive themselves with this opinion also, viz. *that they have no power to be better, or to perform the condition of the promise, nor never had, and that they cannot be better till God give them of his grace to be so, by giving them more power to that end, than ever yet he gave them: and that it is not consistent with his Mercy, nor with his Ju-*

Justice, neither to destroy men for not doing that which he never gave them power to do: from both which together, they are apt to conclude themselves in a safe condition, especially considering that Christ died for them, though otherwise they are apparently vicious in their lives.

But if they would but understand the Method and Order of Divine Assistance, and the Nature and Terms of it, they would find themselves under a great and dangerous mistake. For the very Reason which they urge as part of the ground of their confidence of the safeness of their condition, viz. *that it is not consistent with the Mercy, nor with the Justice of God to destroy men for not doing that which he never gave them power to do, is a strong Argument to prove that he doth give such men whom he destroys before he destroys them, power to do that for the not doing of which he doth destroy them; and consequently that he hath given such bad*

bad men, as reason, as aforesaid, power to have been better, and that therefore the mercifulness of God can be no security to them of not being destroyed, until they become better. If this were not so, it would follow, that either none should perish, or that it is inconsistent with the Mercy and Justice of God that they do, according to the tenor of these mens reasoning. Both which are equally false, and the latter blasphemous also. And therefore it is a deceitful and absurd way of reasoning, for such men to conclude that the reason why they are no better, is, because God hath not given them power to be so.

It is true indeed God hath not given power unto men that are bad, to have been better necessarily and unavoidably; for if he had, they could not have been so bad as now they are. Nor do I say that God hath given such men an immediate power to do all that which belongs unto a compleat performance

mance of the condition of the promise, but he gives them a remote power to do it, by giving them an immediate power to begin it. And if they do but make use of this power by an actual beginning to perform this condition, as they may, God will then give them so much more of it, as whereby they may finish it, unless they refuse to make use of it. So that if men do not perform the condition of the promise, it is not for want of power, but for want of making use of that power which God hath already given them by his preventing grace; otherwise their destruction would not be of themselves, which yet it is, as all grant.

There are none but upon that awakening which they have had from God one way, and one time or other, might out of a dread of him, and of his wrath revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of men, have begun to reform and to become less sinful by leaving off some ill practices;

practices; and they would have found they could have done so, in case they had been sure they should have lost their Lives or Estates presently if they had not. Though they had not power all on a sudden to become good, yet they had power through Gods preventing grace not to have been so bad. The worst of men doubtless had power before such time as by their obstinacy and opposition against God and his dealing with them they sinned it away, to have reformed in part: which to have done out of a dread of God, would have been a beginning to repent, and so a beginning to perform the condition of the promise of pardon. The men of Nineveh *by the awakening of their fears by the preaching of* Jonah, *could we see* turn from their evil ways, *and in particular*, from the violence that was in their hands, Jonah 3. 8, 10. *And by the same assistance and power by which men may become less bad, they may be able also to make more use than they have done of the means of Grace, and*

to

to become positively better thereby to a degree. Which if they do, and do not by seeking out vain reasonings and evasions, obliterate that sense *by which they began to be better, God will supply them with more power to proceed in the Work of* Reformation, *until it come to a Work of* Renovation *of the whole man, both in heart and life, and therein unto a performance of the condition of the promise.*

And as it is we see, matter of great moment that the people be made to understand the Method of Divine Assistance, so is it of no less concernment for them to understand upon what terms it may be expected; as whether upon previous conditions or without. For if it be not to be expected but upon conditions to be performed on our part, and yet we think otherwise, we shall be in extream great danger of depriving our selves of that assistance, by neglecting what belongs to us, to make our selves capable of it.

And

And therefore for a right understanding of this matter, we must distinguish between such an assistance as is onely preparatory to a farther assistance, and that by means of which, the condition of the Promise is compleatly performed. And if we do, we shall find that the preparatory assistance is indeed afforded unto men without any condition at all, save what our Saviour hath performed by his Mediatorial obedience to obtain it for us. And this Preparatory Assistance is that which we call Gods Preventing Grace, because by it he prevents all endeavours on our part to make our selves capable of it. For he is aforehand with us in giving us the Gospel, and the Ministry of it, who live where it is; and so he is by his secret operations upon our minds to make us sensible of our danger, thereby to stir us up to bethink our selves how we may escape it: and all this before we do any thing our selves with an intent to raise such a sense or consideration in our selves.

But

But although Gods Preparatory Assistance and Preventing Grace is vouchsafed unto men without any condition, yet his farther *Assistance is promised but upon condition of making use of his* former. *When God hath been at work in mens minds to make them sensible of the danger of their sinful state and bad tendency of their evil ways, and hath laid before them how they may escape it; if yet they will not make so much use of all this, as thereupon to concern themselves more than they had done about the affairs of their Souls and another World, they can have no reason to promise themselves any* further *assistance from God; nor can they be sure to have any repetition of the first. For our Saviour hath told us, saying,* What measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you: and to you that hear more shall be given. Mark 4. 24. *According to what measure we mete in the attendance, or non-attendance of our minds to make use of those aids and assistances which God affords*

affords us, it will be measured to us in affording, or not affording us more. And when he says, that unto you that hear, more shall be given, we cannot understand more thereby, than that the promise of more assistance is made, but onely to such as do attend to what God hath already admonished them of, and who have so far taken into consideration what he hath said or done to them by his Word, and by his Works of Providence without, and by the awakening operations of his Spirit within, as not to slight them, but to be inclined thereby to be more mindful and solicitous about their Salvation, than ever they were before.

And that our Saviours words aforesaid, To you that hear, more shall be given, *are to be understood in a conditional sense; that is, that more shall be given upon condition of attending to what had been done before, is evident by his next words,* verse 25. For he that hath, to him more shall be given,

ven, and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath: *that is, (as will be shewed in the following Discourse) from him that hath not used and improved that which was first given him, shall be taken away that which he already had, rather than have any more given him. By which assertion of our Saviour, it appears that this is a Law of Heaven, a rule which Almighty God is resolved ordinarily to observe in dispensing his assistances unto men, that those who do not make some good use of his preventing grace, his former assistance, shall after some time of trial have that suspended, and the current of it stopt. As on the other hand they that do, shall have more of it given them. And if they make a good use of that* more *also, they shall have more added to that other more, a second degree of assistance added to the first, and a third to the second, and so on. For God is and will be leading the way, he will be aforehand with us in his assistances; and if we do but follow*

allow him in our endeavours to make use of them, he will still afford us more and more, until he hath carried us up to a good degree towards perfection. He is still working in us to will and to do; that is, to will better and to do better by assisting us so to do: and if we do but work too, as he expects we should, by making use of his assistances to work out our own salvation, the great business of of our Salvation will go on prosperously.

This, I doubt not, is the truth *which lies in the middle way, between the two contrary extreams of* Pelagianism *on the one hand, and the opinion of* Irresistible *Grace on the other; into one of which, men will be in great danger to fall, if they do not understand the Nature and Terms of Divine Assistance.*

The right understanding and due consideration of this Doctrine of Divine Assistance, is very necessary also

to make us all thoroughly sensible *how much the work of grace from the beginning to its greatest growth and perfection, depends upon the Divine* aids. *Though it is not Gods Method to convert men without their own endeavours and use of the means appointed and vouchsafed by him, yet the success of such endeavours depends upon the concurrent operation and influence of the Spirit of God.* Paul *may plant, and* Apollos *water, and We likewise use our endeavours, but yet it is* God that gives the increase, *and causes them to prosper. Nay it is God, who by his Preventing Grace does first excite in us that, from which all our endeavours of this nature do spring: for it is* God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, *Phil.* 2. 13.

Whatever therefore our endeavours may be, and how excellent soever the External means are which are vouchsafed us for the begetting or increasing

sing of Grace, yet it is not safe to depend upon these for either (otherwise than as they are means by which God conveys his Grace to us) but upon the gracious and powerful operation of God by those means. And that is the reason why in the use of all means, we are to seek unto God by Prayer, for somewhat beyond what he hath put into the means or instruments of Grace onely as such. Hence building up our selves in our most Holy Faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, *are joined together*, Jude 20. *What made the Gospel to make so strange an alteration in the World on a sudden as it did in the minds and manners of men upon its first setting forth after our Saviours ascension? but that mighty presence of the Spirit that accompanied it unto the minds of men. We cannot say it was onely because of the Miracles that kept pace with it, which yet were wrought by the power of the Spirit. For how little did the numerous and marvelous Miracles of our Saviour pre-*

vail, (though he ſpake alſo as never man ſpake) until the time came that the Spirit was poured out in greater abundance as well on the Hearers as on the Preachers of the Goſpel. The Apoſtles in their ſpiritual Warfare did indeed pluck down ſtrong holds, caſt down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God; *but it was becauſe the* Weapons of their Warfare were mighty through God; *that is, through the mightineſs of his operation that went along with them*, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

And as the ſenſe *of how much the Work of Grace depends upon the Divine Aſſiſtance, proceeds from the knowledge and conſideration of the* nature *of it; ſo our* Application *to God, and* Dependence *upon him for it, depends upon the ſame knowledge and ſenſe alſo. For unleſs men have ſome knowledge and ſenſe, as of their need of Grace, and of the neceſſity of their performing*

the

the condition of the Promise in order to their obtaining the benefits promised, so unless they have some sense also of the necessity of Divine Assistance to perform that condition, and of the terms on which they may have it, they will neither desire these things, nor use Gods appointed means to obtain them, nor depend upon him for them in the use of means. But by how much the more sense they have of their need of these things, and of Gods willingness to assist them in the use of means for the obtaining them, and of his willingness to confer them upon such terms, by so much will they apply themselves to God for them, and to the use of the means by which he conveys them, and in doing so depend upon him for them. And by how much they do thus, by so much they are likely to be filled with the Spirit, *and to be taken out of the spirit of the World, and to be acted by another Spirit, and to have their hearts lifted up in the way of the Lord. For the Holy Spirit will most certainly be*

given unto such who out of a sense of their great need of it, and of its excellency and usefulness, do earnestly, beg it of God, and depend upon him for it, in a conscientious use of that assistance they have already received. For our blessed Saviour hath assured us that the Heavenly Father will much more, and much sooner give the Holy Spirit to those that ask it, than earthly parents will give good gifts unto their children, *Luke* 11. 13. I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me, *saith the Wisdom of God, and is truly applicable unto the Spirit of God, Prov.*8.17.

And by how much we are made sensible that all our Christian performances depend upon the Divine Assistance, by so much the less we are in danger of trusting in our own strength, or of attributing them to our selves: and by so much we are likely also to ascribe them all to God, and to say with David, Of thine own we have given thee,

and

and with the other Prophet, Thou Lord hast wrought all our works in us; *and accordingly to love and to praise him for all his aids.*

And lastly, The knowledge of the Doctrine of Divine Assistance, is of great use likewise to animate and hearten us in the way of our duty, against the discouragements we meet with in it, from the difficulties of performing it, and oppositions against us in it. For by the Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Divine Assistance, we are assured, that if we do but in good earnest set about our duty in performing the condition of the Promise, our ability to perform it will increase upon our hands, They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; and to him that hath more shall be given, and he shall have abundance. *And by how much our strength doth increase through the Divine Assistance, by so much the work will grow more and more easie, and the difficulty wear off. That which*

is

is with difficulty done by one, while he hath but the ſtrength of a child, will be done with eaſe and pleaſure when he grows towards the ſtrength of a man. And although we meet with oppoſition and temptation to turn us back again after we have ſet out, (and uſually the greateſt difficulty is found in our entrance upon the work, while we are unaccuſtomed to it, while our corruptions are yet ſtrong, and our ſtrength but little) yet if we do but hold on our way, and rally again as oft as we we receive any foils, we ſhall be ſure to overcome at laſt, and come off with compleat Victory; Becauſe, *as S. John ſaith*, greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World. *And though our* beginning be but ſmall, yet our latter end ſhall greatly increaſe. *It is ſaid of our bleſſed Saviour*, that a bruiſed Reed he ſhall not break, and ſmoaking Flax he ſhall not quench, until he ſend forth judgment unto victory.

And

And thus we see how very much depends upon the due knowledge and understanding of the nature and method of Divine Assistance, and of the terms on which we may expect it.

The better understanding, and practical use of all which by such whose abilities do not set them above it, is the design of the following Discourse.

THE

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ERRATA.

Pag.101.l.17. for *stony ground*, r. *high-way side.*

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CHAP. IX.

A DISCOURSE OF Divine Assistance.

CHAP. I.

How God prepares men towards performing the condition of the Promise, by causing Principles of Natural Religion to operate on the Mind.

ALmighty God and our Saviour have thus far prevented all endeavours of ours towards the bringing about our Salvation: The Father hath given his Son to be the Saviour of the World, and the Son hath given himself

ſelf a Ranſom for all, and taſted Death for every man: and upon account of his Death and Paſſion, a Promiſe is made to all men of pardon of Sin and eternal Life, upon condition of Repentance, Faith, and ſincere Obedience. And God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not onely ready, willing and deſirous to *aſſiſt us to perform this condition*, but do actually aſſiſt even thoſe towards it to a degree, and until that aſſiſtance is refuſed, oppoſed, and rejected, who yet periſh for want onely of performing that condition.

Now this Divine Aſſiſtance which men receive in performing the condition on which Pardon and Life are promiſed, is intended to be the ſubject matter of this Diſcourſe. In the entrance upon which I ſhall ſuppoſe and take for granted, that the promiſe of the pardon of Sin and eternal Life, is conditional; and that Faith, Repentance, and ſincere Obedience, make up the whole of this condition.

And that we may the better come to underſtand the nature, manner, and method

method of this *Divine Assistance*, I shall endeavour two things.

1. To shew what is done by God by way of *Preparation*, to prepare and dispose the minds of men to perform the condition of the Promise, in Repenting, Believing, and in sincerely obeying the Gospel.

2. To shew what is done by God to assist them in that performance being so prepared.

That something is done by God by way of *Preparation*, without which no man does savingly believe in Christ, I gather from our Saviours own words in *John* 6.44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* And again, Ver. 65. *Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father.* And in Verse 45. thus, *Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* These sayings of our Saviour shew that something must be done upon men by God the Father, before they can repair to Christ, as to the great Master that hath

the *words of eternal life*, as resolving to be ruled and governed by his Doctrine and Precepts in seeking Salvation; or which is the same, before they can become his real and true Disciples or Scholars in learning practically of him the way to eternal life: for that is it I understand by coming to Christ. And this, according to our Saviours doctrine, no man can do, that is not first prepared for it by the Father, by hearing and learning of him, and by being drawn by him.

Now what effect upon the Soul that is, or what temper of mind it is which is caused by the Fathers teaching, and which does prepare men so as that they come to Christ thereupon, is not here said in the fore-cited words of our Saviour. But we may be able to make some judgment of it, after two or three things are considered, which our Saviours words direct us to.

1. It is not Faith it self, as having Christ for its object. For coming to Christ, or believing in him, is the effect of that temper of mind which is wrought

wrought by the Fathers teaching and drawing here ſpoken of, or at leaſt is conſequent to it.

2. This temper of mind wrought by the Fathers teaching or operation, is ſuch in the nature of it, as does incline and diſpoſe men to come to Chriſt, and to believe in him, though it be not that coming to him it ſelf, nor that believing in him. *For every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, does come to the Son.*

3. This temper of mind is ſuch an effect, and that by which it is wrought ſuch an act, as is moſt properly attributed unto God the Father. It is that which comes by mens learning of the *Father*, it is that by which the *Father* draws them.

Theſe things conſidered, that temper of mind then which does moſt incline and diſpoſe men to come to Chriſt and to believe in him, to embrace the grace offered through him and by him, and to ſubmit to the terms on which it is offered, muſt needs be that effect upon the Soul which our Sa-

viour here speaks of, without which no man can come to him.

And this I conceive we shall find to be a *strong sense* upon the mind of the guilt of sin, and of a liableness to Gods wrath thereby, accompanied with a fear of it, and with anxiety of mind, about ones future state after death, and likewise a sense of the different tendency of moral righteousness and goodness, and a teachable frame of spirit as the effect and consequence of such a *sense*.

For that uneasiness of mind which the foresaid sense causeth, begets a teachable frame of Spirit, makes men willing to hearken to those terms which are offered in the Gospel, to free them from the foresaid fears, pain, and anxiety of mind. The sense I speak of, and the pain caused thereby, prevails against those *prejudices* by outweighing them, which men before and till then, had against those terms, without submitting to which, Pardon and Salvation are not to be had, and makes them willing to accept of them. Though while

while they are but in the way of preparation to perform the condition of the Promiſe, they are not come ſo far as to chuſe to ſubmit to that condition out of love to thoſe things of which it does conſiſt, yet their ſenſe of danger, and the pain of fear of falling under it, may incline them to think their ſubmitting to the condition of the Promiſe much more tolerable and ſupportable than their ſenſe of danger, and pain of fear is, which is upon them; and that will diſpoſe them to take ſuch things into conſideration, as will in a little time reconcile their minds and wills to thoſe things in which the condition of the Promiſe doth conſiſt: and if it do but that, yet it is preparatory to that performance.

Now this *ſenſe* of guilt and danger, and of the better tendency of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs, may be raiſed in the mind by the operation of principles of natural religion, when God is pleaſed to ſet them home, and to make the force and power of them to be felt, as I ſhall after ſhew. And

that may be the reason why all this preparatory work upon the mind, is ascribed unto God the Father, as we see it is by our Saviour. For natural Religion and the effects of it upon the mind, are most properly ascribed unto God the Father; and the reason is, because natural Religion was planted by him in the nature of man before the Fall, while supernatural Religion by the Mediator had not yet any being in men. And preparation for Religion supernaturally revealed (as the Religion of believing in Christ is) may well be ascribed unto our being taught by natural Religion, because Religion supernatural, is founded in that which is natural. Men must first believe the Being of God and his Attributes, before they can believe supernatural revelations to be from him, and so to be undoubtedly true. *He that comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. 11. 6.

Men may indeed be prepared by the Father to come to Christ, by some of the

the same doctrines which our Saviour himself taught, when powerfully impreſt upon the mind, and yet this be done by principles of natural Religion, becauſe a great part of his doctrine is the same with natural Religion; onely natural religion is more perceptible by his doctrine, than while onely in the dark minds of men. He came, as he himself says, *not to deſtroy, but to fill up the Law*; to make a more compleat diſcovery of the latitude and ſpirituality of the natural Law, than *Moſes* and all the Prophets had done, *Mat.* 5. 17. But the Fathers teaching and drawing, mentioned by our Saviour, being but to prepare men to receive principles purely evangelical, it cannot reaſonably be thought to be done by ſuch, but by thoſe which are natural.

To believe then the Being of God and his Attributes, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future ſtate, the different tendency of moral good and evil, and the Rewards and Puniſhments in another World, are principles of natural Religion. And a powerful impreſſion

pression of these Principles upon the minds of guilty persons by Almighty God, hath a great tendency in it to prepare and dispose them for a belief of the Gospel, when made known to them with the evidence of its divinity; and that in a double respect.

1. As they come to be convinced thereby of the guilt of sin and of their obnoxiousness by that to the wrath of Almighty God, and to be anxiously concerned in their own minds about their future state after death.

2. As they come thereby to a sensible discerning of the nature and tendency of moral righteousness and goodness.

1. Such a powerful impression upon the mind, of principles of natural Religion as I have said, prepares men for a belief in Christ, as they come thereby to be convinced of their guiltiness and of their obnoxiousness by that unto the wrath of Almighty God, and to be anxiously concerned in their own minds about their future state after death.

The

The natural operation of natural conſcience, doth ſomething to make men ſenſible of the guilt of ſin and of their liableneſs to divine diſpleaſure thereby. St. *Paul* ſpeaking of the Heathen that had not the Law, ſaith that their *thoughts did accuſe them*, when ſin was committed againſt the dictates of the light and law of Nature; and that their *conſcience did bear them witneſs* that ſuch accuſations were true, *they knew the judgment of God that thoſe who did ſuch things were worthy of death*, *Rom.*2.15. and 1.32. The conſequence of all which, when ſet home upon the mind by God by a vigorous operation, muſt needs be diſquietneſs, fear, and anxiety of mind, and doubtful apprehenſions touching Gods diſpleaſure and the future ſtate.

And that the very Heathen were upon this account in an uneaſie condition, and under diſquieting apprehenſions of the divine diſpleaſure, appears by the many ſacrifices which they offered to attone God, and to appeaſe the clamour of their own conſciences.

And

And well might their condition be very uneasie to their minds, while they were certain of their liableness to the divine displeasure, but ignorant and uncertain of any remedy against it. S. *Paul* describes their condition to be such as that they were *without hope*, *Eph.*2.12. that they *were darkness*, not knowing whither they were going, or what would become of them at last. They had nothing of revealed Religion whereby to know with any certainty that God would pardon them upon repentance. And therefore their future state must needs have hung in doubt before them, and have caused fear day and night.

From this fear and doubtfulness of mind doubtless it was, that besides their Sacrifices, they ran into so many other superstitions as they did, as hoping by them to appease the displeasure of God, and to make some compensation for their offences against him, as by punishing themselves for them by severities which they exercised upon their own bodies, and sometimes upon their own children.

I mention these things, to shew in what anxiety of mind the very Heathen were, by reason of the operation of natural conscience under the sense of their guilt of sin, and of their obnoxiousness to God thereby. And this sense, and these fears, as the effect of natural conscience, were increased and heightned, as it pleased God by his secret operation upon the mind, to give weight unto them; as we may easily conceive by what befel *Cain* and *Judas* in that case, when they were so unable as they were, to bear the lashings of their own consciences.

Nor could their Sacrifices give that ease to their guilty consciences which they sought for by them, unless they could have discerned more of proportion in them to the nature of the Immortal God which made Heaven and Earth, than they could with any great confidence fansie there was, to make compensation to him for their offences. Those Sacrifices which the Jews offered from time to time, though by Gods own appointment, could never make

make those for whom they were offer'd *perfect as pertaining to the conscience*, as the Apostle speaks *Heb.*10. They could not *purge the conscience* from those fears and troublesome apprehensions wch the sense of the guilt of sin raised in them. For which cause they, and not onely sinners of the Gentiles, *were through fear of death, all their life time subject unto bondage*, as not knowing for all those Sacrifices, what the event and consequence of death might be unto guilty persons obnoxious to God, *Heb.* 2.15.

It is true indeed, these impressions of natural Religion, are not made by God on all men alike, and consequently all are not alike awakened by them: though none I presume are without fears and doubts more or less, about their future state, until they are cured of them, by living up to principles of revealed religion, or else by a desperate course of sinning, have sinned themselves into a kind of *reprobate mind*, and become *past feeling*. And then indeed they may through *searedness of con-*

conscience, come to have little or no feeling of those disquieting effects of the guilt of sin, whereof I speak.

But men do not come to this until they have greatly neglected, and not attended to this teaching of the Father by impressions of natural Religion; not until they have been labouring to put all thoughts about their future state, and their liableness to Gods displeasure out of their minds, that they might be no more troubled with them.

But when men will needs deal thus from time to time with God and themselves, and bid God himself and all serious thoughts about another World, depart from them; then indeed God many times withdraws his secret way of working upon their minds by powerful impressions of natural Religion, (yea and of revealed Religion too in like case) and leaves them to fall into that spiritual *slumber or sleep* St. *Paul* speaks of, *Rom.* 11. 8. By which sleep the inward senses of their souls are bound up, as the bodily senses in bodily

dily sleep are; so that they no more hear, see, feel, or perceive in a spiritual sense what God says or does to them, than a man in a natural sleep does perceive, what is spoken or done to him.

But this is not the case of those whom the Father by his teaching draws to Christ: he keeps their conscience waking, and makes sin uneasie to them by the fears it raises in their minds, of what may be the event of all at last.

Now such an operation of God upon the mind, as I have been speaking of, hath certainly a tendency in it to draw men to Christ, when sufficiently revealed, and to make them willing to receive the Gospel, and to become his Disciples.

And the reason hereof is taken from the *suitableness* that is between the minds of men so affected, and the Gospel. Men so prepared by the Fathers teaching, are sensible of the troublesom and dangerons condition into which Sin hath brought them. And nothing can be more acceptable to such than a discovery and offer of that which

which will give eaſe unto their troubled thoughts and doubtful minds; and this the Goſpel of Chriſt is exactly fitted and provided to do.

This Goſpel diſcovers unto them that the guilt of ſin, as to the penal part, is taken away by the Son of God, and by his ſuffering for them. This Goſpel contains a Proclamation from Heaven, publiſhing and declaring Gods willingneſs upon the account of his Sons ſuffering for them, to be reconciled to, and to pardon all ſinners whatſoever, that will but ceaſe from their wilful rebellion againſt him, and come under his Sons moſt gentle and gracious government, his eaſie yoke, and light burden.

Such good news as this, was a *ſuitable good* to ſuch as were before under doubts and fears whether God would not prove an enemy to them at laſt, who had carried it as enemies to him all along, and avenge himſelf on them for their oppoſition againſt him. This is a *good* ſo *ſuitable* to ſuch, that nothing could give eaſe to their minds

like it. All the things this World affords, can no more do it, than silver and gold can ease the pain of hunger and thirst, when food is denied. It is the suitableness of the Gospel, and a mind so prepared as I have shewed, that draws men to Christ, when the Gospel reveals him for such a Saviour as he is.

This is that which makes the very Messengers which bring the glad tidings of the Gospel, acceptable to such for their message sake. *How beautiful,* saith St. *Paul, are thee feet of them which preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?* *Rom.* 10. 15. And how beautiful were his feet in the eyes of the *Galatian* Gentiles, when he first brought the Gospel among them? who before were in fear and doubt about their future state and without hope: I say, how beautiful were his feet upon this account, when they *received him as an Angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus*, as he himself saith, and counted *the blessedness* so great, that as he says, *they could, if it had been possible,*

poſſible, have plucked out their own eyes and have given them unto him, Gal. 4. 14,15.

The news of ſuch a Saviour as the Goſpel declares him to be, is to ſuch as are in darkneſs and anxiety of mind concerning their future ſtate after death, like the Day-Star and Riſing Sun to ſuch as have been in the uncomfortableneſs of a gloomy and dark night. Hence he is ſtiled the *bright and morning Star*, the *Day-Spring from on high*, *the Sun of Righteouſneſs that does ariſe with healing in his wings.*

The Angel which firſt publiſhed the Birth of Chriſt to the Shepherds, ſaid, *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which ſhall be to all People*, Luke 2.10. And ſo the Goſpel hath proved to be, eſpecially to thoſe who have been prepared to receive it, by being concerned in their own minds how they ſhould do to be ſaved. Thus when our Saviour preached the Goſpel firſt in *Galilee*, it is ſaid that then *the People ſaw a great light, and to them who ſate in the region of the ſhadow of death,*

light was sprung up, *Mat.* 4. So such as were *pricked* in their hearts through a sense of guilt and danger, *gladly received* the Word, which brought them tidings of remission of sin through Christ upon Repentance, *Act.* 2. 37, 42. Thus again, when the Gospel was first preached in *Samaria*, it is said *there was great joy in that City*, *Act.* 8. The Gentiles also when they had the Gospel first preached unto them at *Antioch*, *they were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord*, *Act.* 13. 47.

The Gospel was not so welcome to all where it came; and what was the reason it was not as well as to others? The reason was, because they had not learned by the Fathers teaching, as some had done, but stifled the operations of natural light in their minds, and had laboured to lay their Consciences asleep again, after at any time they had been awakened by God. They laboured to put thoughts about their future state out of their minds because they found them troublesom unto them. *They closed their eyes and*

stopped

ſtopped their ears againſt any thing that tended to awaken them.

But all did not ſo, but remained thoughtful about their future ſtate after death, when God once had awakened them by ſtrong impreſſions of natural Religion to be concerned in their own minds about it. And they were ſuch as theſe who were wont to receive the Goſpel, and believe it when it came among them. As we ſee for inſtance in thoſe Gentiles to whom *Paul* and *Barnabas* preached, *Acts* 13.48. For it is ſaid of them, *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Or, as others from the Greek read it, *As many as were diſpoſed to, or for eternal life, believed:* that is, as I, after others, underſtand it, As many as were ordered, or whoſe thoughts were ordered, and minds diſpoſed for eternal life; that is, to look after eternal life, theſe were the People that believed.

And indeed the Goſpel was deſign'd in chief, as it ſhould ſeem, for thoſe whoſe hearts and minds are bruiſed or broken with fears and cares about their

their Salvation. For thus run the words of that Prophesie which was fulfilled in the Publication of the Gospel by Christ. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke* 4.18,19. Which is true, not onely in respect of those that are bruised and broken in heart with godly sorrow for sin, but also in respect of such whose hearts and minds are bruised and battered with fears and terrours, in reference to that misery to which they stand exposed for sin.

And it is further considerable to our purpose, that those which our Saviour invites to come to him, and promiseth them *rest* if they do, are such as *labour and are heavy laden*; that *labour under, and are laden* with anxious thoughts and cares about their future state; for they are a wearisom burden to the mind.

mind, *Mat.* 11.28. And again, *If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink*, ſaith our Saviour, *John* 7.37. and *let him that is a thirſt come*, *Rev.* 22. 17. to wit, ſuch as lack and long for ſome cooling and refreſhing to their minds and ſpirits which are heated and inflamed with anxious thoughts and cares about the condition of their ſouls for the future, when they ſhall leave the body. For this Invitation is made to ſuch as were not yet come to Chriſt, had not yet truly believed in him: For a true belief in him quencheth this kind of thirſt. And therefore our Saviour ſaith, *he that believeth in me, ſhall never thirſt*, *John* 6.35. And again, *Whoſoever drinketh of the water which I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt*, *John* 4. 14. This water when once well drunk of, quencheth that flame which before burnt up the ſpirits.

Again, to ſhew what preparation of mind is neceſſary to make us prize Chriſt when offered, and willing to be governed by him in order to our cure and eaſe, conſider that ſaying of

our Saviour, *Mat.*9.12. *The Whole need not the Physician, but the Sick*; to wit, such as are *ill at ease in their own minds*, for that is the meaning of the Metaphor, I conceive. Other than such have not a sense of their need of a Physician, nor will care to be governed by his Methods of Physick. Which was the reason why our Saviour chose rather to be among Publicans and Sinners than Pharisees: for those being more sensible of their obnoxiousness to Gods displeasure than the Pharisees were, who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous*, were better prepared to receive the Gospel than the Pharisees were. Which appears by that saying of Christ to them, *Mat.*21.31. *Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.*

Thus we see how the teaching of the Father by impressions of natural Religion upon the mind, prepares men for a belief in Christ, and a receiving his Gospel, as they come thereby to be convinced of their guiltiness, and

of

of their obnoxiousness to the displeasure of God thereby, and to be concerned in their own minds about their future state after death.

2. I am now in the second place to shew how the teaching of the Father by natural Religion prepares Men for a belief of the Gospel, as they come thereby to a sensible discerning of the nature and tendency of moral righteousness and goodness. Men are taught by natural Religion, that it is a thing good in it self, and well becoming them to adore and worship God the author of their Being, and to seek unto him in all their needs; to be just and faithful, and kind one to another. And they know and find by experience that when they most observe to do so, they have most ease in their own minds. Their Consciences never trouble them for any thing of this nature: these things when they do them, do not make them afraid of God, as things of a contrary nature do. Such as these are things about which mens *thoughts do excuse* them, as the Apostles phrase is,

is, *Rom.*2.15. And men find a vast difference between excusing and accusing thoughts. These do not draw men before the Judgment Seat of God before the Judgment Day does come, as accusing thoughts do.

Now the stronger sense men have of the excellent nature of moral righteousness and goodness, and of its peaceable and comfortable effects upon the mind, the better prepared they must needs be to put on the yoke of Christ, and to submit to his government and precepts of life; because those precepts of his, are almost, and in a manner *all* of them of *a moral nature.* The things which he enjoins his Disciples, are generally good in themselves, and rather to be chosen than their contrary, in case there were no other reward attending them, but onely their suitableness to humane nature. The minds of men are better appaid and satisfied in doing those things which Christ enjoins, whether they know he enjoins them or no, than they would or can be in doing the contrary. To do to all men

men as we would they ſhould do to us under like circumſtances, brings more ſatisfaction to the mind than the contrary. Humility brings more eaſe to the mind than Pride; and ſo does Love than Envy and Malice: and ſo does Meekneſs than Wrath and Rage; and ſo does Mercy than Cruelty, and ſo do moderate deſires to the accommodations of this life, than thoſe which are exceſſive. And Temperance and Chaſtity contribute more to the eaſe and health of the body than Intemperance; and ſo of the reſt.

The conſequence of all which is, That the more men are by powerful impreſſions of natural Religion upon the mind, made ſenſible of the excellency of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and of the peaceable and comfortable effects of the practice of it, the ſooner and the more eaſily they will be induced to embrace the doctrine of our Saviour, which in reference to practice, conſiſteth moſtly of matters of that nature.

For we muſt know that here the matter

matter sticks most with men. They are well enough content to hear of Christs having expiated sin by the sacrifice of his death, and that forgiveness is preached in his name. But to men that are wedded to their several Lusts of immorality, the Precepts of Christ which are quite contrary to those Lusts, are to them so many *hard sayings*, and they say within themselves, Who can hear them?

But by how much men are taught by natural Religion to discern the difference between Morality and Immorality, both in the nature and effects of them, as to the peace of the mind on the one hand, and to the disquiet thereof on the other, as to the honour of their nature and name on the one hand, and to the shame thereof on the other; as to the ease and health of their bodies on the one hand, and to the contrary on the other; by so much are they in a fit preparation of mind to receive the Laws of Christ, which enjoin morality with promise of great reward, but prohibit and condemn all im-

immorality under the ſevereſt penalties.

The condition on which the pardon of ſin and eternal life were promiſed through Chriſt, conſiſts moſtly in a ſincere performance of moral duties towards God and men: it conſiſteth of ſuch a Faith as worketh by love to God and men; which love is an evangelical fulfilling of the Moral Law, as we are taught, *Mat.*22.40. *Rom.* 13. 8, 10. *Gal.*5.14. From which it ſtill follows, that by how much men are improved in morality by the teaching of God, by ſo much is their belief of the doctrine of Chriſt, and the fulfilling of his great and precious promiſes facilitated.

And the reaſon hereof is, becauſe his rules and precepts of living, agree with thoſe ſentiments and notions of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, which are planted in the nature of man; and therefore the conſent of their minds to them as juſt, reaſonable, and good, and fit to be obſerved, muſt needs be the more eaſily obtained. And not onely

ſo,

so, but by means of this congruity between the Precepts of Christ *without*, and the notions of moral righteousness *within* us, planted in the nature of man, way is made also to gain belief of the other doctrines of Christ, which depend wholly upon supernatural revelation; such as are his being the Son of God, and the forgiveness of sin, and the like. For when they find our Saviour in his doctrine pressing and inculcating upon the minds of men such precepts of moral righteousness and goodness, as they by their own natural light know to be good, and therefore from God, but never any thing to the contrary, they will be the more easily induced to believe him to be no Impostor, but one sent from God, as he affirmed he was, and consequently to believe all his other doctrines.

Now as concerning the manner how Almighty God doth raise such a sense in men of the true nature and effects of moral righteousness and goodness, as by which they are prepared to believe the Gospel, I do not think he doth it onely

onely by assisting their faculties to act according to their natural liberty, for so he does assist them when they abuse their liberty in acting sinfully: but God does it by ingaging their minds more to consider their ways than they had done before; to consider the nature and tendency of those good ways which they had refused to walk in, and the like concerning those evil ways which they had chosen. And by a frequent representation of these things to their thoughts, and by drawing their minds to look more narrowly into them, they come better to discern the nature and tendency both of the one and of the other, and so to make a better judgment of them. And by that means their former aversation from that which is good, and strong and violent inclination to that which is evil, comes to be weakned and something broken. And this prepares them to be quite overcome by the powerful motives of the Gospel, when they come to be considered, and to be turned quite about. This we see in *David* for

for an instance, *Psal.*119.59. *I thought on my ways and I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* And again, *Ezek.* 18.28. *Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* In these Scriptures we see consideration takes place first with men before they turn, and by that means they are brought to turn: that which is consequent upon consideration of ones ways, is turning from transgression and to Gods testimonies.

Now God can and does when he pleaseth, pitch mens minds and thoughts upon such things as he would have seriously considered, and in some sort terminate and hold them to them. *David* knew this when he prayed thus unto God: *Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy People, and prepare their heart unto thee,* 1 *Chron.*29.18.

To exemplifie this whole matter of Gods preparing men for the belief of the Gospel; let it be considered how it came to pass that those few uncircumcised

cumciſed Proſelytes from among the multitude of thoſe of the Nations of the Gentiles, at firſt came to be ſuch. How came ſuch as the *Æthiopian Eunuch* and *Cornelius* to be ſuch devout perſons as they and other ſuch Proſelytes are deſcribed to be, when the generality of thoſe Nations remained ſtill in groſs Gentiliſm? Doubtleſs it came to paſs by the awakening of their minds by God, to conſider things more than their Neighbours did, to conſider the nature and tendency of morality and immorality, and what was like to be the iſſue of both at laſt, in reſpect of rewards and puniſhments in another World. And the innate light and reaſon of their minds would dictate to them, that Vice could not poſſibly tend to their happineſs, nor Vertue to their infelicity in the next World. And this made them, before they were Proſelytes, ſo far as the light of nature aſſiſted by God did lead them, to chuſe to do what was moſt likely to end in happineſs, and to avoid what was moſt likely to make them miſerable at laſt. This no

doubt made them betake themselves to the worship of the true God onely, when others of their Neighbours did not; and in this to join with the People of *Israel*, though not entirely in the same Institutions of Worship, because they were not given them in command as they were to the *Jews*. This difference between them and other of their Country-men, did first spring, as I say from their taking important things more into consideration than others did. And by this they came to be prepared to receive the Gospel, so that they fell in with it readily when it was preached unto them, sometimes at the first hearing. Those Proselytes we read of *Acts* 13. 48. were such as were ordered and disposed in their own minds towards eternal life, to wit, to look after it, and to be thoughtful about it; and as many as were so, did as we there see, believe.

Such as these Proselytes, were those *other sheep* (I doubt not) of which our Saviour spake, *John* 10. 16. which as he said, *are not of this fold, them also I*

must

must bring, and they shall hear my voice. They were made tractable afore-hand, ready to follow the Shepherd when they should hear his voice. Such also we may well suppose the good Ground hearers to be, who were of good and *honest hearts*, as they are described, *Luke* 8.15. of honest minds, not willing to represent things to themselves better than they are, nor to put a cheat upon themselves and their own souls, by flattering them into a better opinion of themselves, and of their good condition Godward than there is cause. Like him of whom the Psalmist speaks, *Who flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful, Psal.* 36.2. They are not of such partial and dishonest minds as to be thoughtful and careful about the outward Man, and things of this present World, and to be altogether regardless and careless of their souls the better part, and of the concerns for Eternity, nor treacherously to betray them.

Thus far to shew how God hath prepared men for the belief of the

Gospel, onely by making principles and notions of natural religion operative in them by a powerful impression of them upon their minds.

Chap. II.

How God by adding Revealed Religion to that which is Natural, prepared the Jews for the performance of the condition of the Promise.

In times under the Law, and before the appearance of Christ in the World, Almighty God prepared the People of the Jews for the Faith in Christ, by adding Revealed Religion to that which is Natural, and by making that which was Natural, more powerful and operative to such an end, by that which was revealed.

After the Original Law which is implanted in the Nature of all men, became much blurred and defaced in the minds of men, a fair Copy of it was deli-

delivered to that People by God, written in two Tables of Stone. And this was done, as for other ends, so for this, to wit, to awaken in them a greater sense of the guilt of sin, and their liableness thereby to the wrath of Almighty God, and to condemnation. *The Law worketh wrath*, saith S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 4. 15. that is, it maketh the Transgressor of it the more punishable, and exposeth him the more to wrath. *For the strength of sin is the Law*, as the same Apostle saith in another place, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. it is that which armeth those actions against a man, which would not have been punishable if there had been no Law against them. *For where there is no Law, there is no transgression*, as he saith in the former Text. And where there is no transgression, there can be no punishment due. And by parity of reason, where the Law is more obscure and less discernable, the transgression of it must be the less punishable: and the more manifest and express the Law is, by which men are left without all excuse of ignorance

touching the evil prohibited, the greater and more criminal must the offence needs be, as when committed against a Law promulgate and fully known. This is that which stops the mouths of men against all excuse and plea of ignorance, and lays them naked and open to the penalty of the Law. *What the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every mouth might be stopt, and all the World found guilty before God, or subject to his judgment, Rom.* 3.19. And as the offence against the Law is aggravated and enhanced, by how much the more the Law is known to be expresly against it, by so much may the punishment be expected to be increased by that means. *He that knew his Masters will and yet did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,* above what he shall suffer, whose opportunity of knowing his duty hath been less.

Now this was the case with the Jews: they were under the natural Law before it was promulgated to them,

them, as well as all other Nations. But that Law of Nature was grown so blurr'd and illegible through the pravity and degeneracy of men, that they could hardly discern that to be sin in many cases, which was sin by the Law of Nature. As for instance, *I had not known Lust to be sin*, saith S. *Paul*, *unless the Law had said, thou shalt not covet.* They could hardly discern inward concupiscence in this or that particular to be sin, unless it brake out into open act. But now by the promulgation of the natural Law, this came to be known to be sin, which indeed was so before, but not so certainly known to be so; and the like in other cases. But when this and other things were by a promulgate Law more clearly known to be sin, it was then at their greater peril, if they fell into them: and consequently they must needs be the more apprehensive of their danger, and their fear the greater in case they did. S. *Paul* personating a Jew both before and after the promulgation of the Law, saith, *I once was alive without the Law,*

but when the commandment came, then sin revived, and I died. He did not know himself to be in so ill a case, as the Law when it came discovered him to be. And therefore he saith again, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and by it slew him*, *Rom.*7. By all this we may understand what S. *Paul* meant, when he said, *that the Law entered, that the offence might abound*, *Rom.*5.20. that is, that the offence in the evil nature and mischievous effects of it, might be more abundantly known, and men made more sensible of their sad condition by reason of it: and that for this reason among others, that grace might so much the more abound in the sight of men, when the way and means of escaping that condition should be made known to them. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* This state of theirs under the Law, was that state of the *spirit of bondage to fear*, whereof S. *Paul* speaks, *Rom.*8.15.

But

But then this prepared the way of the Gospel, by making that which tended to remove those fears the more acceptable. To you that *fear* my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with *healing* in his wings, saith the Lord, speaking of his sending Christ among them, *Mal.*4.2. he came with *healing* to those souls which had been *bruised* and made *sore* before by fears and terrours that did arise in their minds out of that darker state of the Church, wherein the way of salvation by Christ, was more obscurely revealed.

But besides this, by the promise they had of the Messiah, and by the types and shadows of him in the Law, and by the many predictions of the Prophets concerning him, the Lord prepared them for the reception of him when he was come. *The Law* in these respects, was *a Schoolmaster to bring them to Christ*, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal.* 3. 24.

The

The many precepts of moral righteousness and goodness also wherein they were instructed out of the Law and the Prophets, prepared them likewise to receive Christ for the true Messiah when he was come indeed, for this reason, *viz.* because of that harmony and good agreement that was between our Saviours precepts of living, and what they had been taught before, both by natural light, and by revealed Religion superadded to it. By this former teaching of the Father, some of them became such Sheep as our Saviour said his Father had given him, *John* 10.27,29. It was by vertue of this preparatory teaching of the Father that they knew the Shepherds voice when they heard it. By this they could distinguish between the voice of the true Shepherd or Messias, and the voice of Strangers, the voice of hirelings. Because the doctrine of our Saviour agreed with that way of righteousness which they had learned by the teaching of the Father, as none others did that were but pretenders. It was this

that

that made such of them as had heard and learned of the Father, to come to Christ, to follow this Shepherd when they heard his voice, that is, to become his Disciples.

And yet more particularly, *John* the Baptist was sent by the Almighty Father, to prepare them by his Ministry for their reception of Christ, and believing in him. It was foretold by the Angel before his birth, that he should *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*, *Luke* 1.17. and by a spirit of Prophecy at his birth, that *he should go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way*, *Vers.* 76. which he did by two things especially; by awakening them to repentance, and by giving them notice of the near approach and appearance of the Messiah. *He came into all the Countrey about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*, *Luke* 3.3.

The People of the Jews were in great part become such a *generation* as

Solo-

Solomon speaks of, that *were pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness*, *Prov.* 30. 12. strict observers of the Ritual part of the Law, but very immoral in their temper and in their lives: full of a self-chosen righteousness, *their fear towards God, taught by the precepts of men*, to wit, the tradition their Elders. They were not sensible of the badness of their state, their obnoxiousness to the wrath of God, nor of their need of repentance in amending their lives. And under these circumstances a Christ that should come to save them from their sins, was not like to be very welcom unto them, nor to answer their expectation who looked to be saved from the *Roman* Yoke by the Messiah, but not from their sins.

Now that our Saviour might not lose the end of his coming amongst them, *John* the Baptist was sent before him to convince them of their bad condition, of their guilt of sin before God, and of their liableness to his wrath.

wrath. That whereas thitherto the judgments upon their Nation, even the worſt that had befallen them, had been but like the lopping of branches from off the trees that would grow again. But now the Axe was laid to the root of the trees, to cut them quite down, never to grow again; that the utter ruine of their State, Nation, and Temple was not far off, if not prevented. And that nothing could prevent it but confeſſion of ſin, and *bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.*

Now this raiſed a ſpirit of fear in them of the wrath of Almighty God which hung over them for their ſins; which made ſuch multitudes to come to his Baptiſm, to confeſs their ſins, and by his Baptiſm to liſt themſelves as Penitents. And by this teaching of the Father, they were the better prepared to receive Chriſt when he came, eſpecially when pointing to him, he told them, *this is the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the World*, that ſin of theirs which expoſed them to ſuch danger

danger, and that put them in such fear as aforesaid.

And who were the Ring-leaders in opposing Christ when he was come, but the Pharisees, Lawyers, and Scribes, such as rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and would not be baptized of *John*? They were such as were never prepared by a sense of their sin, and of the danger they were in thereby, *but trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* They were such as thought themselves so whole as to need no such soul-physician as Christ. They did not believe as the Publicans and Harlots did, that they were in any such danger by reason of sin as *John* told them they were; and that was the reason why they kept themselves out of the Kingdom of God, whilest the others entered in, as our Saviour told them, *Mat.* 21. 31, 32. *Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.* And he gives the reason of it in the next words; *For John*

came

came to you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and the Harlots believed him. Those who did believe *John*, and were awakened with a sense of their danger because of sin, they crouded, as it were, into the Kingdom of God while that impression lasted. *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*, saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 11.12.

If enquiry be here made, that since some of the Jews in our Saviours time, were by the Fathers teaching in those several ways before mentioned, so prepared as that they followed Christ the good Shepherd when they heard his voice, and so became his Disciples. Then how came it to pass that all of them did not do the like, who had the same means of learning and of being prepared?

To satisfie us in this enquiry, it is necessary in the first place to take notice that

that there is a great difference between God the Fathers teaching of men, and their learning of him: he teaches all, when yet but few learn of him. Our Saviour saith, every man that hath *heard* and *learned* of the Father, cometh unto me, *John* 6.45. Not every one that hath heard him, but every man that hath heard him so, as to learn of him, by receiving instruction from him in a way of preparation. For these are two things, and the one alas, too frequently found without the other. *Though I taught them rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkned to receive instruction*, saith the Lord by his Prophet, *Jer.* 32, 33. there is a Teaching without a Learning.

Now the reason why they did not learn when they had the same teaching as others had; and so the reason why it was not afterwards given to them, as it was to the Disciples of Christ, to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, is given by our Sa-

Saviour, *Mat.* 13. *Because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing; and they have closed their eyes; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Which words signifie their refusing, and more than a bare refusing of that assistance which God for some time vouchsafed them to prepare them for that farther grace and mercy which comes by Jesus Christ: they signifie opposition and striving against their being helped and healed, their endeavouring to throw off, and to defend themselves against the means used by God to awaken them, and to bring them to consider things in order to their cure and amendment of manners. *When God called they refused, when he stretched out his hands to them they regarded not, they set at nought all his counsel, and despised all his reproof, and hated knowledge*, as *Solomon* expresseth the ill carriage of

such as would not in the least be prevailed with, or wrought upon by such applications as God made to them, with promise of further assistance of his Spirit and his Word if they would. *Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Prov.* 1.23, and following Verses.

Our Saviour by the foresaid words in *Mat.* 13. does not, I conceive, so much intend to set forth the then present ill carriage of the Unbelieving Jews in not entertaining the Gospel, as their obstinacy and untractableness under Gods former applications to them in a lower way of teaching, than that of the Gospel. For their carriage signified by those words of our Saviour, is alledged by him as the reason why it was not given to them to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, as it was to his Disciples. For they had opposed and withstood those lower beginnings of God with them, by which he would have prepared them

them for higher vouchsafements. And accordingly our Saviour applies that saying to their case, *Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that which he hath.*

God had been representing to them by his Prophets, and by the Ministry of *John* the Baptist, besides his secret operations upon their minds, the danger they were in by reason of their immorality, notwithstanding their outward Church-priviledges, and notwithstanding their numerous Sacrifices, and other ceremonial observances. But they laboured to silence the clamour of their consciences, when God had any whit awakened them, and to lay their souls asleep, and to persuade themselves there was no such danger did attend them, since they were a People with whom God had entered into Covenant to be their God, that they had *Abraham* to their Father, to whom God had said, I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed. Though they were proud and covetous, unjust,

unfaithful, cruel, envious, and malicious, *Yet they leaned upon the Lord, saying, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us*, as the Prophet speaks, *Micah* 3.11.

These things considered, the reason appears plainly why all the Jews, who at first enjoyed much-what the same means, the same assistance from God to prepare them for a belief of the Gospel, yet were not prepared for it as others of them were. They refused, nay they resisted Gods first assisting grace, whereby he would have prepared them to receive farther assistance from him. And when men do so, and continue to do so, God after some time of striving with them, suspends that application which he formerly made to their minds to prepare them for farther assistance. After which, though they may see, the Works of God, and hear his Word, and be found in the use of some external acts of Religion for fashion sake, and to do as others do, yet then they do not perceive, understand,

derſtand, or conſider to any good effect upon themſelves, the end and deſign of them, and ſo are not one jot the better for them, but rather more ſtupid and ſenſleſs, which the Scripture calls Gods *hardening or blinding* of men. Not that I ſuppoſe the holy and good God infuſeth any malignant or obſtinate quality into their minds or wills; for *God does not tempt any man to evil*, *James* 1. 13. but his hardening of them, is either his *with-holding* that *aſſiſtance* by which his Spirit did ſtrive with them to make them better, *Gen.* 6. 3. or permitting the evil Spirit more freely to tempt them, the conſequence of which is their growing worſe and worſe. And thus he dealt with ſuch like untractable and obſtinate Jews in Ages long before the coming of our Saviour, *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *My People would not hearken to my voice, Iſrael would none of me. So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts*; not reſtraining them as ſometime he had done. And again, *Ezek.* 24. 13. *Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt*

not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, Isa.6.9,10.

Chap. III.

Of the necessity of those effects on the mind, which God sometimes works by Principles of Natural Religion, to prepare all those for the performance of the condition of the promise, which do at all perform it.

After all this which hath past, you will say perhaps, What does all this discourse concern us, who live after Christ is come, or any who call themselves Christians, and which do own Christ to be the true Messiah and Savior of the World? The Jews indeed they were prepared for their receiving of Christ against he should come, by principles of natural and revealed Religion, and some of the Gentiles by principles of natural Religion onely. But how can this concern us Christians who

who have prevented the need of any such preparation for receiving Christ, by having received him already, as having been taught by our Parents from our Childhood to do so, when they taught us all the Articles of the Christian Faith?

Yet we who live now after Christ is come, are as much concerned to be prepared for a saving reception of Christ, by the *same temper of mind*, as they were who lived before his coming. Our Saviour hath said it, *That no man can come to me, except it be given unto him of my Father, John 6.65.* And again, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, ver.* 44. And if this be true with respect to all men, then of us who live in these days, as well as of those who lived when Christ first appeared in the World. For our Saviours words, we see, contain an universal proposition; No man to whom it is not given of my Father; No man whom the Father which hath sent me draweth not, can

come unto me. He does no more limit his assertion to those who did precede, than to those who do succeed his coming.

There is no doubt but a sense of our obnoxiousness to the displeasure of God, and the sad effects of it in another World, upon the account of sin, is as necessary now as ever it was, to prepare and dispose men heartily to receive Christ: because it is by this sense on our minds, that Christ is looked upon as the most *suitable good*, and consequently as the most desireable good, as I shewed before. It is by means of this sense when any thing strong and affecting, that Christ becomes precious unto men, as he is to every one that believes. *To you that believe he is precious*, saith S. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. A true sense of the danger we are in, by having provoked the great God against us, gives great disquietness to the mind, until we come to know that that displeasure is taken off, and the danger we were in thereby removed. And it is the

the ſenſe of this danger that makes Chriſt precious to us, when we come to underſtand that we cannot eſcape this danger but by him; and when we find that pain removed by believing in him, which the ſenſe of danger before put us to.

And it is this ſenſe that prepares the ſoul to receive Chriſt as Lord as well as Saviour, by that time the Goſpel is well opened to men. And the reaſon is, becauſe they underſtand thereby, that none can have the benefit of that Atonement and ſatisfaction made by his death, but ſuch as are content to be governed by him in their lives, and to yield obedience to his precepts: that none can be ſaved by him, that refuſe to become ſincere Diſciples to him. And they will find it no unreaſonable thing for them to obey his Precepts and to imitate his Example, when they underſtand that to do ſo, is in effect but to abandon thoſe ſins which created ſo much trouble in their mind before, by making them liable to and by putting them

them in fear of the eternal wrath of Almighty God. The sense of that danger their sins had exposed them to, and of that anxiety of mind they were brought into thereby, will prepare the mind and dispose the will to receive Christ as Lord, and to obey him in forsaking those sins, so long as they are well assured, that then and not till then they shall be pardoned through his bloud, and so be discharged from those fears of the wrath of God which had given them such uneasiness of mind before.

And when they have found the difference between the ease of mind and peace in the Spirit which they have by their knowledge of Christ so long as they obey him; and the sad thoughts, dark and doubtful apprehensions, misgivings of mind and storms in the spirit, which sin had wrought and raised in the soul before, it will then make them out of love with sin, and afraid to have any more to do with it.

And

And thus you see according to the reason and nature of the thing, how useful and necessary such a sense is, as I have oft mentioned, to prepare and dispose men to go to, or to receive Christ, when he is made known to them by the Gospel, and that as well now under the Gospel, as before; if by receiving Christ we understand such a receiving as is saving. But otherwise men may, and doubtless do, without any such sense as is effectual to its end, not onely profess belief in Christ, but also really believe in him with an inoperative, ineffectual and dead Faith.

And to the end we may yet farther see how necessary such a *sense* in men of their danger, as I have been speaking of is, *to prepare and dispose* them to come to Christ in good earnest, and to believe in him with all their heart, I shall shew it you by the method which our Saviour and his Apostles used in their preaching. Both he and they insisted mainly in the first place in order to mens conversion, upon such doctrines

ctrines as tended to beget in them *a great sense of their danger by reason of guilt upon them.* And this they did by preaching Repentance; by which as I shall presently shew, they laboured to beget such a *sense* in men.

Our Saviour began his Preaching with this, *Mat.* 4. 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And so did his twelve Apostles when he sent them out by two and two: *They went out and preached that men should repent,* saith S. *Mark* 6. 12. When the Author to the *Hebrews* gives a summary account of the first Principles or beginning Doctrines of Christ, *Repentance* from Dead Works is not onely one of them, but is the *first of all in order*, *Heb.* 6. 1. S. *Paul* gave this account to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, both of the method and substance of his preaching publickly and from house to house, when he told them that he had testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance towards*

towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: First Repentance, then Faith: Repentance for sin, and from sin; and then Remission of it through faith in Christ.

Now in thus preaching Repentance in the *first place* they laboured to possess men with a strong sense of *the danger they were in until they did repent.* For that was the great Argument or motive by which they persuaded them to it. *We knowing the terrour of the Lord, we persuade men*, saith S. *Paul* 2 *Cor.* 5.11. Thus our Saviour taught the People, that so long as they did not repent and reform, though it should cost them the cutting off their right hand, and plucknig out their right eye to do it, *they were in danger of being cast into Hell, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched, Mark* 9.43. *That they were condemned already, and that the wrath of God did abide on them, so long as they continued in unbelief, John* 3. 18, 36. When S. *Paul* preached Repentance at *Athens*, his argu-

argument to perſuade to it was, *because God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, Acts* 17.30,31. And no greater argument can be uſed to awaken mens fears, and to haſten them out of an impenitent ſtate, than to ſet before them the terrour of that day, and the danger they are in every hour of falling under it, ſo long as they remain unreformed. The conſideration of which, while the impreſſion was upon him, made *Felix* the *Roman* Governour on the Bench *to tremble*, when *Paul* at the Bar reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and *the judgment to come*, *Acts* 24. 25.

And generally mens Repentance takes its *firſt riſe* from their *fears* of falling under the wrath of Almighty God. Which doth very well accord with what was ſaid by *David* in the *Pſalms*, and twice by *Solomon* in his Proverbs: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom*, *Pſal.* 111. 10. *Prov.* 1.7. and 9.10. The beginning of Wiſdom

Wisdom, that is, of becoming truly wise, as men are when they become truly religious, and never till then. And this usually *begins* as I say, in those *fears* which are raised in men, out of a sense of their obnoxiousness to the wrath and displeasure of God for sin past. And from thence indeed it proceeds to a fear of displeasing him any farther for time to come, in hope of obtaining pardon for what is past: and this is wisdom indeed (*there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared*, *Psal.*130.4.) But *fear* in this latter sense, hath its *rise* and beginning from fear in the former.

The principle of Self-preservation, which is deeply rooted in every mans nature, does naturally cause a fear of God, as armed with Almighty power to destroy them that have provoked him. But in mans degenerate state, we cannot say it is so natural to fear displeasing him, nor is attained to without some hope of pardon for what is past. Fear in the former sense goes before

before fear in the latter, as the needle does before the thred. It hath indeed as godly sorrow hath, a tendency in it to work Repentance, though neither of them amount to saving repentance it self. Fear of wrath *hath torment* in it, and that prepares a man to hearken to that which will give him ease, to wit, the doctrine of pardon through Christ, and to the doctrine of Repentance as the condition of obtaining it. As rain and moisture are to the ground on which Weeds or Thorns grow, to prepare the way of tearing them up by the root, so is the fear of Gods wrath to make way for the plucking up mens lusts by the root: it makes the heart more soft and tender. For by how much sin hath disquieted and perplexed the mind with fears of the wrath of God (provided it be not to excess, as in case of despair) by so much the less grievous it will be to part with it, in hope of obtaining both ease and pardon thereby.

But

But here to prevent all misuse of this Doctrine touching the necessity of a sense in each sinner of his obnoxiousness to the wrath of God, to prepare him for such a Repentance, Faith, and Obedience as is saving; let this be observed and remembred by way of caution, to wit, That no greater a sense hereof is necessary to this end, than that which issues and ends in such a Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. We must not measure the truth and sincerity of our Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, by the measure or degree of the sense we have of our liableness to Gods wrath, or our fears of it; but on the contrary, the dueness or sufficiency of such a sense to prepare us, by the truth and sincerity of our Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. It is not unlikely but that *Cain* and *Judas* might have a greater sense of their obnoxiousness to the wrath and displeasure of God, than most of those who through a due sense of their liableness to wrath, have been prepared for a saving Repentance, Faith, and Obedience: but yet we

cannot judge by that, that they had any such Repentance or Faith.

So much sense therefore of mens danger by reason of their guilt of sin is sufficient, be it more or less, as does prevail with them sincerely to repent of sin past, to receive Christ Jesus as Saviour, Lord, and Governour for time to come, to save them from sin by his death and to be governed by his precepts and example for all times to come, whether peaceful and prosperous, or however adverse or hazardous they may be. And the reason why such a sense is sufficient, be it more or less, is because it reacheth its end, it hath done its work for which it was raised by God, when once it hath thus drawn men to Christ to become his true Disciples, to believe in him, and to learn of him the Christian life. All means whatsoever are sufficient in their kind, when they attain their end for which they were appointed, and so this of which we now speak. This is a truth seen by its own light.

By

By this the great mistake of some good people appears, who have been afraid to apply Christ unto themselves as a Saviour, and to lay hold of the gracious promises of the Gospel, as being in doubt with themselves, whether they had been sufficiently humbled, broken, and prepared by legal terrors; when yet they have been zealously desirous and industrious to approve themselves to him in a good life. When once men are made willing to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, and to walk in him as they have received him, there is no place left to question whether their humiliation hath been sufficient or no. For our Saviours *invitation* of coming to him, is made to him that is *athirst*, and his promise to him that does come in good earnest, is, that he will *by no means cast him out*. The promise of being received if they do come to Christ, is not made upon condition of being thus or thus humbled, but upon condition of their coming to him. Nor does any degree of that humiliation which consisteth in fear

or terror, avail any man further than it is an occasion of his applying himself to the remedy prepared by God against his danger.

By what hath been said to shew what sense of ones spiritual danger is sufficient in its kind, and for the end for which it serves, it may appear also, That such persons as have by the advantage of a pious education, drunk in operative principles of godliness in the early days of their lives, so that like *Obadiah* they have *feared God from their youth*; or as *Timothy, have known the holy Scriptures from a child*, need not be in doubt of their own good estate Godward, though they have not found in themselves so tormenting a sense of their spiritual danger as some others have done, to prepare and dispose them to repent and believe the Gospel, if they can but find and feel in themselves Repentance and Faith in the true nature and genuine effects of them. No man need much to be concerned about the nature of the means,

means, as whether it be proportionate to the end, after he once sees the end effected in himself. His sense of danger is sufficient, which causeth him to fly in due time to the place of refuge.

There needs a greater sense of danger, and more affecting fears, to make one willing to part with those sins and evil ways he hath been long accustomed to, and hath had a strong affection for, than there is to make another willing to forego those evils he never had much to do with, nor much affection for. An ordinary blast may throw down a Plant before it hath taken rooting, when no less than a great tempest and strong blast will tear up a Tree of long standing and deep rooting.

Yet I must say, that the greater sense men have of the greatness of the danger they were in, and the more that sense hath afflicted their soul with fear and grief, by so much the more they

are likely to value and prize, to love and honour that Saviour by whom they find themselves delivered from it. Hence it is that such as have been greater sinners than others before conversion, have many times proved more eminent Saints than others after; fuller of love to Christ, and zeal for him. Thus it was with *Mary Magdalen, who loved much because much was forgiven her*, as our Saviour said. Whereas, as he observes likewise, that he to whom *but little is forgiven, the same loveth but little, Luke* 27.47.

And thus I have dispatched the first of the two things I proposed to insist on, and to explain, to wit, what is done by God by way of preparation to dispose the minds of men to perform the condition of the promise. I shall now proceed to the second, which is to shew what is done by God to assist men in the actual performance of that condition on which pardon of sin and eternal life are promised.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How by the very Nature of the Gospel, God does assist men in performing the condition of the Promise.

IN shewing what God does in assisting men in the performance of the condition of the promise of Pardon and Life, two things will come under consideration;

I. What assistance is given by God, by his very giving us the Gospel to this end; and

II. What by the influence and operation of his Spirit.

1. That men are *assisted* by the *Gospel* in their performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life, is very evident. S. *Paul* saith, *it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*, *Rom.* 1.16. *That he had*

begotten the Christian Corinthians through the Gospel, 1 *Cor.*4.15. And S. *James*, *that God of his own will begat the Christians by the word of truth*, *Jam.*1.18. And S. *Peter*, *that they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 *Pet.*1.23.

Supposing men to be prepared by such teaching of God the Father, as hath been before described, the Gospel it self is of such a *nature* as makes it very apt to attract and draw such men to the belief of it, and obedience to it, when attended to, in which the performance of the condition of the promise doth consist: and this in a double respect.

I. In respect of the subject matter of it, or things contained in it.

II. In respect of the evidence by which it is confirmed to be from God and undoubtedly true.

1. *In*

1. *In respect of the subject matter of it, or things contained in it.* As for instance; it contains a Declaration, who, and what an one *Jesus Christ* is, *viz.* the Son of God and Saviour of the World, and what he hath suffered to make atonement for the sin of the World, and to obtain reconciliation between God and men, after their rebellion against him. And the Gospel as such, cannot but facilitate its own way into the minds of such men as are burdened and pained with the sense of their own guilt, and liableness to Gods displeasure. It being suited to their case, and contrived on purpose to give to such ease and relief, it cannot but render it self acceptable to them.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, saith S. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. It is indeed a saying, a doctrine worthy of acceptation, if any thing is so which the World ever knew, yea worthy of all acceptation to the highest degree. And its being

being so, makes sinners which are sensible of their very great need of a Saviour, the more ready and willing to believe it, and to hearken to any thing that tends to strengthen their belief of it. We have a saying which is found true upon common observation, That men are willing to believe that to be true, which they would fain have to prove so, and are inquisitive after the evidence of its truth, that they may confidently believe it, and rejoice in it. I have shewed before with what joy the Gospel was entertained at its first going forth into the World, by such as were to any considerable degree made sensible of the danger they were in by reason of sin, and therefore I do not need to enlarge upon it farther here.

Again, the Gospel contains great and precious promises of pardon of sin and eternal life, upon condition of Repentance, Faith, and new Obedience, and most dreadful threatnings against such as reject those terms. Now the Gospel

Gospel in these respects, is of a persuasive nature, and hath an aptness and fitness in it to prevail with men to use their endeavours of performing the condition of escaping the damnation of Hell, and of obtaining the glory of Heaven.

First, the terrible threatnings denounced against such as continue unreformed in their lives, when these fall into minds already disquieted with fears for what is past, are very apt to alienate mens minds from sin, and so to help on the performance of that part of the condition of the promise, which consisteth in Repentance or amendment of life. The stronger sense men have of their danger by reason of sin formerly committed, and also of running into greater danger, if they continue in sin, after pardon is offered upon condition of amendment, the more easily will they be perswaded and prevailed upon to accept of the condition of pardon, and to put forth their endeavour to perform it. The sense of

danger

danger which divine threatnings do awake in men when any thing strong, will cause them to enquire how they may escape it, to the end they may speedily fall upon the use of such means by which such an escape may be obtained.

Thus those *pricked in their hearts*, Acts 2. *cried out*, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* And the Goaler when once in a trembling posture, *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?* Acts 16.30. These affectionate enquiries caused by a sense of their danger, argued their willingness to do any thing they could to escape it; of which they gave proof by setting immediately, and without any delay, upon what they were directed to do to that end.

This sense of danger awakened by divine threatnings, so long as it lasteth, will take off that pleasure which men before were wont to find in ways of sin and wickedness, and make the taste of them bitter, and by that means estrange

eſtrange their minds from them. What is it that makes men at any time to fall out with their ſins and turn them off, but an awakened ſenſe in themſelves, by which thy feel they have been betrayed by them into the ſnare of death, into ſuch danger as that the very ſenſe and fear of it, quite ſwallows up that pleaſure which they were wont to take in thoſe ſins. And under theſe circumſtances, it will be a matter of far leſs difficulty for men to perform the condition of the promiſe, ſo far as that ſtands in forſaking of ſin, than it would be to continue in it. For in this caſe they find the fear and trouble which ſtill is at the heels of ſin, is far greater than any pleaſure they can then find in it. *In vain is the Net ſpread in the ſight of any Bird*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 1.17. Even ſo, while men have their eye upon the preſent fear and future danger ſin expoſeth them to, it diſarms the temptation to it of its power, and renders it too weak to prevail with them to run themſelves into the torments of preſent fears, and into eternal

nal destruction for the future. A Dog will forbear his otherwise desired morsel, while his eye is upon the Cudgel which is held over him.

Secondly, the promise through Christ of such inestimable benefits as the pardon of sin, and the eternal glory of Heaven are, upon condition as of Faith, so of sincere Obedience, hath a great tendency in it to reconcile our minds to our duty in particular acts of obedience. It is inseparable from the nature of men to desire the happiness of their own Being, in the general notion of it, and for perpetuity also. And the more desirable any object is, and the more there is in it to make our happiness great, the more powerfully are we drawn thereby to comply with the condition, and to use the means of obtaining it, when we hope it to be attainable. The greater and more attractive the object of desire is, by so much will the difficulty of the condition and means of obtaining it, seem the less. *Jacobs* serving seven years

for

for *Rachel*, seemed to him but a few days, for the love wherewith he loved her.

All which shews that the immense greatness of the benefits promis'd in the Gospel, does tend greatly to reconcile our minds to the condition of obtaining them, notwithstanding some present difficulties do attend it. Just as we see in other things: Men would not cark and care, moil and toil as they do, nor undertake such wearisom journies and hazardous voyages as men commonly do, were it not that the benefit they expect to obtain thereby, does reconcile their minds to these difficulties. What enabled *Moses* to forsake the treasures of *Egypt*, and the honours of *Pharaohs* Court, and to unite himself with an oppressed People, when he could not otherwise avoid sin and serve his God as he had a mind to do? Why, it was the *eye*, the *respect* he had therein *unto the recompence of the reward*, *Heb.* 11. 25,26. The hope of the recompence of reward, made the diffi-

difficulties of Gods service, the reproach of Christ, and suffering with the People of God, more eligible and desirable than the pleasures of sin, which were but for a season.

Hope of benefit we see then is a great and powerful principle of action in men: and if the promise of the great things of the Gospel does but affect, stir up and quicken our hope, this will be enough to put those endeavours into motion, by which the condition of obtaining them will be performed. *It is by the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel that men are made partakers of a divine nature*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. And the reason is, because these promises do affect their hope; this hope changeth the thoughts and purposes of men, in order to the obtaining of the things promised and hoped for; by all which they become new men, restored to the image of God which had been lost by sin, which is the divine nature.

The

The difficult part of performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life, lies in mens forsaking the sins to which they had been accustomed, and in practising the contrary Vertues from which they have been estranged. But the Gospel we see enables men to do both by working upon their fears and hopes. For when two such powerful principles of action concur and conspire together to promote the same end, to produce the same effect, as they do in this, though in different respects, the operation must needs be very great, powerful, and prevalent, and the work like to go on with good success. Fear and hope are the two handles of the Soul, by which it is taken hold of and drawn.

2. Having thus shewed, how apt and fit the Gospel is in respect of the subject matter of it, to draw men to such a belief of it, and obedience to it, as in which the performance of the condition of the promise of pardon and life doth consist: I am now to shew in

the next place its farther aptitude this way, in respect of that evidence it hath of its Divinity, Truth, and Infallibility.

For indeed all the power it hath to work upon mens fears and hopes by its menaces and promises, to the producing of their effects in mens lives and actions, depends wholly upon the supposition of its truth and certainty. Men would not be moved neither by the threatnings nor promises of the Gospel, how great soever they be, did they believe the Gospel to be but fabulous. And therefore the All-wise God hath as much concerned himself to give sufficient attestation to the truth of the Gospel, as he hath, to acquaint men with the things reported in it.

To this end the Almighty Father hath by a *voice from Heaven* testified that Jesus Christ is his beloved Son, and that his doctrine is to be attended to, as to one whom he had sent into the World to declare his whole mind touch-

touching mens ſalvation, *Mat.* 3. 17. and 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.* To the ſame purpoſe alſo ſerved thoſe numerous *miracles* which he wrought. For theſe were *ſigns* to aſſure us that he was what he affirmed himſelf to be, *viz.* the Son of God, and conſequently that his doctrine is of divine authority. *Many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book. But theſe are written that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name, John* 20. 30, 31.

Theſe miracles in conjunction with the nature of our Saviours doctrine in nothing contrary to natural Religion, had certainly a very great tendency in them to beget a belief in him and of his doctrine, or elſe he would never have marvelled as he did at the unbelief of thoſe which ſaw them and heard him, *Mark* 6. 6. *He marvelled at their unbelief.* Their unbelief under ſuch

circumstances, is mentioned again as matter of wonder, *John* 12.37. *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* But this would have been no matter of marvel to our Saviour, or wonder to his Disciples, if there had not been a mighty power in those miracles to convince men and to persuade them to believe. To this end also served the resurrection of Christ from the dead: for by that he was *mightily declared to be the Son of God, Rom.*1.4.

And when the Apostles of our Lord were after his Resurrection sent forth to convert the World to Christianity by preaching the Gospel to them; as a means to make it efficacious to this end, and to procure it credit and authority in the minds of men, they were endued by the Lord with a power of working miracles, and of speaking with new tongues, *Mark* 16.20. *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*, Heb.2.4. *God also bearing*

bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.

And it was in reſpect of theſe powerful confirmations of the Goſpel, I doubt not, that S. *Paul* ſays his *preaching was in demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power*, and not with enticing or perſuaſible words of mans wiſdom, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. It was by reaſon of this kind of demonſtration of the Goſpel to be from God, which was made by the miraculous operation of the Spirit by the Apoſtles, that the Goſpel was received as the Word of God, and not as the Word of Man; as all thoſe Diſcourſes of Philoſophers were, which had no other confirmation, than what the Wit and Oratory of men could derive from principles of natural and humane Wiſdom. But the Apoſtles doctrine, as it was in the nature of it above humane pitch to find out, ſo their way of confirming of it was above all humane power and wiſdom alſo. As their

doctrine was known onely by the Holy Spirits revealing, so the arguments, motives, and reasons by which they perswaded men to believe it to be from God, were fetched from the Spirits own mighty operations, which were visible to men, as well those that did not, as those which did believe. *They compared and suited spiritual things with spiritual, ver.*13. The nature of their arguments by which they perswaded men to believe their doctrine, were suited to the nature of their doctrine; both being from the Holy Spirit. The one by the Spirits revelation *to the Apostles*, the other by the Spirits miraculous operations *by the Apostles*. They proved their doctrine was revealed to them by God, by the testimony which he gave, that he had sent them to preach what they did preach, by enabling them to do such things which none could do but by virtue of a divine power, which put forth it self in them. God (as was said) did bear them witness by signs, wonders, and by divers miracles which he enabled them to do and to shew. And

And being the Gospel was upon the account of this confirmation, received as the Word of God, and not of Man, as the Author of it; therefore it was that it did operate so powerfully as it did in the hearts and lives of them that received it, to the transforming them in their minds and spirits, and in the tenour of their lives and actions, into other manner of men than they were before. By reason of which transformation, the Scripture stiles them New Creatures, and the man thus altered, the New Man. *When ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us*, saith S. *Paul, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*, 1 *Thess.*2.13.

The Gospel then thus confirmed, as hath been represented, was and is so glorious an object of Faith, and so every way fitted and prepared to command mens belief of it, that S. *Paul* supposeth it impossible but that men should believe it, unless the Devil

hath strangely blinded their minds. And therefore he saith, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

And thus we see what great assistance God hath vouchsafed us for our performing the condition of the promise, by giving us his Gospel.

The Lord by his Prophet, speaking of how much he had done for his People of old, to enable them to be what he expected they should be, in order to the happiness he designed them, saith, *Isa.* 5.4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* that is, What in reason could they expect he should have done more to make them become obedient and fruitful, than he had done? And yet he hath done much more for us who live under the Gospel than he did for them,

them. For he hath ſent his own Son to reconcile us to himſelf, and himſelf to us by his death. He hath ſent his own Son to perſuade men, which is more than all the Prophets which he ſent before. And as he is greater himſelf, ſo he perſuades by greater arguments than the Prophets were wont to do, both in reſpect of what hath been done for us already to oblige us, and in reſpect of what he will do, in rewarding if obedient, and in puniſhing if diſobedient. And all this lies fair before us in the Goſpel, by which life and immortality is brought to light; and which comes to us more gloriouſly atteſted alſo, than the doctrine of *Moſes* and the Prophets did to them. And therefore the Lord may much more appeal to us than he did to them, and ſay, What could have been done more to engage you to believe and obey the Goſpel, and ſo to perform the condition of the promiſe, which I have not done? And if ſo, *How then ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord,*

Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? And yet behold he hath done and does more for us in another respect under the Gospel, than he did in times past for his own peculiar People. For according to the various predictions of the Prophets of old, we under the Gospel have a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit to enable us to perform the condition of the promise of pardon and life, than ever they ordinarily had. Which brings me to the second thing I proposed to insist on, which is, to shew what assistance men receive in performing the condition of the promise by the influence and operation of the Spirit of God.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

How by the Holy Spirits operation upon the Mind and Will, men are assisted in performing the condition of the Promise.

But before I proceed to shew this, to prevent misunderstanding in this matter, I must premise thus much by way of caution, to wit, That when I propose the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit to be considered as an *aid* distinct from that which is vouchsafed by the Gospel it self, I would not be understood thereby to deny that assistance which we receive by the Gospel it self in performing the condition of the promise, to be the *aid and assistance of the Spirit*, at least in some respect. I onely suppose that there is an influence and operation of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men by which they are enabled to perform the condition of the promise,

promise, *over and above* what the Gospel in its own nature abstractedly considered, does contribute thereunto. Otherwise, as I have been now shewing, the operations of the Gospel it self is of, and from the Holy Spirit, both in respect of its revelation and confirmation. So that what is said and done by the Gospel, is in a sense said and done by the Holy Spirit. And they are led by the Spirt, and walk in the Spirit, that make the Gospel their Guide.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *and holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. And the things spoken by the Prophets in the Old-Testament, are said in the New to be spoken by the Holy Ghost, *Acts* 1. 16. and 28. 25. *Heb.* 3. 7. and 10. 15. And it's seven times said in *Revel. c.* 2, & 3. *He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*; meaning what he said to them in and by those Epistles which S. *John* sent to the seven

seven Churches in *Asia*. And God is said to have *testified against the People of the Jews by his Spirit in his Prophets*, *Neh.*9.30. And S. *Stephen* said to those in his time for opposing the Gospel; *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye.* And S. *Paul* said touching such as should despise their doctrine and commands, *He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who also hath given unto us his Holy Spirit*, 1 *Thess.* 4.8. By all this it appears, that what is done by the doctrine of men divinely inspired, is done by the Spirit of God; and what is done against it, or against them for the sake of it, is done against the Spirit of God. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*; saith our Saviour also; *Luke* 10.16.

But yet though the *assistance* men receive by the Gospel in performing the condition of the promise, be the assistance of the Holy Spirit, yet it is *not all the assistance* they receive from the Holy Spirit therein. For when the holy

holy Scripture speaks of *the Gospels coming unto men, not in word onely, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, 1 *Thess.* 1.5. of their being *born of the Spirit*, *John* 1.13. and 3.5. *of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3.5. *of their obeying the truth through the Spirit*, 1 Pet. 1.22. *of a being built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Ephes. 2.22. *of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and of Gods working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure*, Phil. 2. 13. and the like, there is no reason to restrain the sense of such sayings, unto the *alone* operation of the doctrine of the Gospel, as having God or the Spirit of God for its Author, and no more. The Prayers which our Saviour made and taught his Disciples to make for the success of the Gospel, and which the Apostles made and taught the Christians to make for the like; do all of them imply likewise something more to be done by God for the renewing of men unto himself, than onely by his bare sending his Gospel among them. Al-

Although men can consider matters discovered by the Gospel when they hear them, as well as they can any other things set forth by Discourses of another nature; (and indeed God expects they should do so, at the peril of their own destruction, if they do not) yet such is the zeal of the Lord to promote and set forward the business of our salvation, that he is *not willing to trust the work onely in our hands*, though he hath brought it to our hands by such preparations wherein he hath prevented all endeavours of ours. *He doth not onely bring the Gospel and our minds together, and then leave them to operate upon each other in the strength of their own nature onely*; but is graciously pleased to accompany his word more or less, as he sees good, with a secret operation of his spirit upon our minds, both to incline and *dispose* the internal faculties to exercise and imploy themselves about matters of this high nature, and likewise to *assist them in it.*

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There is doubtless a secret power and efficacy of the divine Spirit goes along with the Gospel into the mind and will, by means whereof the Gospel does the more readily and effectually work upon the mind and will, to the renewing of them. When the Disciples scattered by occasion of the Persecution by *Saul*, preached the Gospel to the *Grecians*, it is said, *The hand of the Lord was with them; and that a great number believed and turned to the Lord*, *Acts* 11. 21. Their believing and turning to the Lord, was the effect of the Lords hand being with them in preaching, as well as it was the effect of what was preached. *The Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*, *Rom.* 1. 16. Believing and Salvation are the effects of Gods power going along with the Gospel, as well as of the Gospel it self. By that the Gospel becomes more quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. *It is the sword of the Spirit*, as it is called, as well in respect of its being managed by the Spirit, as

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it is by being provided by the Spirit for Christians to manage. The whole success of the Gospel in producing those happy effects in men, by which they become other manner of men than they were before, is ascribed unto the grace and blessing of God that goes along with the Gospel. *I have planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase*, saith S. *Paul*. *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase*, 1 *Cor.* 3.6,7. Upon this account all that appearance of the Vertues of Christ which is in true Christians, by which they give some good account unto the World what an one Christ is, and what manner of thing his Gospel is, is ascribed unto the operation of his holy Spirit upon their hearts, in that metaphorical way, used by S. *Paul* when he told the Christians at *Corinth*, *That they were the Epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God, upon the fleshly Tables of their hearts*, 2 *Cor.* 3.3.

Thus much in general to shew that there is an assistance by the operation of Gods Spirit vouchsafed unto men in performing the condition of the promise, *over and besides* what assistance they receive therein from the nature of the Gospel. I shall now proceed to shew a little more particularly how men are assisted by the operation and influence of the Holy Spirit in performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life. Not to undertake to describe all those ways by which God communicates his *aids* unto men in performing the condition of the promise, but onely so much of those divine methods as may give some light in the thing, and some satisfaction to our minds touching this great affair of our souls.

1. One of the first things is a procuring from men, or Gods working in them *a fixedness of thoughts* upon the things which concern their salvation or damnation, a keeping their minds upon them. Before this is done, men may

may have many *fluctuating* thoughts about God and Christ, Heaven and Hell, and about the way of escaping the one, and of obtaining the other, and yet be little or nothing the better for them. For these being things out of sight, and remote from the senses, there are a multitude of other thoughts which throng into the mind, from external objects that lie open to the senses, which scatter and divide, yea, and which in a great measure exclude and thrust out of the mind, those other more necessary thoughts. The thoughts and cares about the *Farm*, the *Merchandize*, the *Oxen*, and the *marrying of a Wife*, spoken of in the Parable; yea, and worse than these, about unlawful pleasures and undue seeking of honours; these so entertain and take up mens minds, that thoughts of God and another World, and the great concerns of Religion, which have not the advantage of making their way into the mind by the senses, have little or no room there. Hence comes the sin of forgetting God, so much spoken of

in Scripture, which carries in it a forgetting our accountableness to him, and consequently a forgetfulness of all those things which depend upon our minding of these.

Now while thoughts of this nature rule and bear sway in the mind, and other thoughts are onely now and then floating there without any setled abode, these latter can have no powerful influence to alter the standing temper of the mind, or to change the motions and operations of the will, which yet are necessary to the performing of the condition of the Promise. And therefore one of the first things, as I say, which God does in assisting men in the performance of the condition of the promise, is to stay and fix their thoughts upon the things which concern their salvation. Though their thoughts are and must be exercised about the things of this present life; yet their thoughts about their souls and another World, are so fixed by God in their minds, when thus assisted by him,

him, that they are continually intermingling themſelves with their other thoughts, and correcting their extravagancy, and exerciſing a power over them. Here now they dwell; though they muſt give ſome place to other neceſſary thoughts, yet ſo as that they are never long abſent, but ſtill return into the mind. Thus the good Ground hearers which bring forth fruit with patience, are ſaid to be ſuch as having heard the Word, *keep it*, (*Luke* 8.15.) that is, they keep it on their minds, ſo as that it is not ſtolen out of their hearts by the evil one, by filling the mind with other things, as it befals the Stony ground hearers: nor choaked, or ſtifled in its operation by an overpowering multitude of other thoughts about things grateful to the fleſh, as about riches and pleaſures, and luſts of other things, as it is in the Thorny ground hearers. Not as if where God thus fixeth the thoughts upon their principal objects, that there he gives memories to retain all they hear, that is not meant by their *keeping* the word,

but that such keep upon their minds the scope and substance of those points of the Christian Religion as are necessary to their salvation, as the fruit of all their Hearing. It is the *ingrafted Word which is able to save the soul*, *James* 1. 21. that is, as it is ingrafted upon the mind by setled thoughts and fixed consideration, without which men may hear all the days of their life, and yet be but as the *silly women* S. *Paul* speaks of, *laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts*, who were *always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6,7. The Lord made *David* wise through his Word, but it was by keeping it and his mind together. Thou, saith he, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies: *for they are ever with me.* I have more understanding than all my Teachers: *for thy testimonies are my meditation*, *Psal.* 119. 98,99. Thus when the Lord assisted *Lydia* in the business of her believing, *he opened her heart so that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul. She held her*

her self to them; so the *Dutch* Translators render it: she kept her mind staid upon them by serious consideration. And this we see was the effect of Gods operation upon her mind; he opened her heart so that she attended, *Acts* 16. 14. It is God that thus *puts his Law into mens minds*, that pitcheth and terminateth their thoughts upon the things contained in it, according to the tenour of the New Covenant, *Heb.*8.10. This is one thing wherein the Divine Assistance doth consist.

2. Another thing is, the Holy Spirits operation upon the mind, enabling it by the light of the Gospel, to *discern the nature, tendency, and usefulness of the things discovered and revealed by the Gospel*. By mans Apostasie from God, and customary sinning, the mind is darkened, the eye of the understanding corrupted, and thereby to a great degree rendred impotent, and unable to discern things discovered by the Gospel to be what they are, though set before it. Like the man in the Gospel,

who while imperfectly cured of his blindness, saw men walking as Trees: they have and can have in that state but confused and indistinct notions of spiritual things: *if the eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkness.* This being mans case, there is need of a Divine Power to work some cure upon the Eye of the mind to discern aright concerning the things of the Gospel. *David* had some sense of this upon his mind when he prayed thus unto God: *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things of thy Law*, *Psal.* 119.18. The Disciples had not right notions of things revealed by the Scriptures concerning Christ, until our *Saviour opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures*, *Luke* 24. 45. When the Veil is taken away, so that men *with open face behold the glorious things of the Lord in the Gospel, it is by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Though *the hope of the Christians calling, and the riches of the glory of Gods inheritance in the Saints* are revealed in the Gospel, yet S. *Paul* knew for all that,

that

that there was need of *having the eyes of the understanding inlightned, to know and discern what those are*; and therefore prayed unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for it, in the behalf of the *Ephesians*, *c.* 1.17,18. And if these Christians after they believed, stood in need to have the eyes of their understanding further enlightned by God, in order to a more clear and full prospect of the gloriousness of the Hope set before them, for the strengthening and encouraging them to persevere and hold out in their obedience to the Gospel, then doubtless they much more stood in need of some enlightning by God in this kind to enable them at first to begin to be sincerely obedient.

In the dark men are apt to mistake one thing for another; so before this illumination of the mind by the Spirit of God, they are apt to call evil good, and good evil; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to chuse evil under the notion of good, and to refuse

good

good under the notion of evil. But when the light of the Law and Gospel are let into the mind, by which every thing is discovered and discerned in its true shape and colour, then Sin and Vertue appear to be what they are in their own nature, sin to be sin indeed, and vertue and goodness to be vertue and goodness indeed. Then sin appears in the turpitude, deformity and malignity of its nature, and in its tendency to the ruine of the subject in which it dwells: and righteousness, vertue, and goodness appear in their beauty and usefulness, and in their tendency to the happiness of such in whom they dwell. For instance; Before this illumination, men are apt to mistake the doctrine of the grace of God which brings salvation, and to think they shall be saved because Christ died for sinners, and because they believe he did so; especially if they be but now and then troubled in their minds, and sorry for their sins, and do pray God to pardon them, though they still continue in them. But when the eyes of their under-

derſtanding are opened to ſee things as they are, and are repreſented in the Goſpel; then they perceive none ſhall be ſaved by the death of Chriſt, what ever their belief may be, but ſuch as ſhall be perſuaded by the great motives of the Goſpel, to be reconciled to God by being reconciled to their Duty, throwing down the weapons of their rebellion, and becoming univerſally ſincerely obedient to his government, according to the Laws of Jeſus Chriſt.

This illumination of the mind by God, contributes ſo much towards mens performing the condition of the promiſe, that the whole of their converſion is ſometimes meant in Scripture, when but this only is mentioned, *Heb.*10.32.

3. Another part of the Divine Aſſiſtance afforded unto men in performing the condition of the promiſe, is the Holy *Spirits operation upon the will* to aſſiſt it in what is proper to it in performing

forming of the condition of the promise. For what ever sense there is begot in men of the danger they are in by reason of sin: or whatever illumination is wrought in the mind touching the way and method laid down by God of escaping that danger; yet until the will be changed and wrought to a firm resolution of complying with the terms on which the promise of pardon and life through Christ is made, the work is not done, the person is not regenerate, nor in a regular capacity of enjoying what is conditionally obtained by Christ, and conditionally promised through him. Men are not begotten of God, nor born of God, as the Scripture speaks of some that are; they are not begotten by the word of truth, nor born again of the immortal seed of the Word, until the change be made in the will as well as in the understanding: and when ever it is made, it is the effect of a divine operation. *It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil.*2.13.

Now

Now in that assistance which is vouchsafed unto men in renewing them in their wills, in *working in them to will*, several things are to be considered.

1. The Holy Spirit disposeth the Will to be *passive*, in reference to those notices given by the enlightned mind and understanding touching those things which have been discovered to it, by the Gospel through the illuminating operation of the Spirit upon it. The Will having been accustomed to busie and exercise it self about other objects, such as the senses have presented to it, things that concern onely this present world and life, it will hardly suffer any passage for heavenly and divine things which are strangers to it, without some divine operation of the Spirit to incline the will thereto, or to open a passage for them. Which is done (I conceive) by suspending the evil influence which the will had upon the understanding, in keeping or with-holding it from considering with any seriousness and frequency,

quency, the things that concern the soul and another life. And if the understanding be but at liberty seriously and frequently to consider such things as well as those that concern onely this present life, the will then cannot but see and taste them to be better, because the mind and judgment in such case, cannot but represent them to the will as much better, and as things wherein the happiness of our nature is much more concerned, than in any, than in all the things of this world.

God in taking off the will from the foresaid bad influence it had upon the considerative faculty, *takes away the heart of stone* the Scripture speaks of. For the heart of stone which God said he would take away, signifies the inflexible temper of the will, and the resistance it makes against the understandings taking those things into serious consideration which tend to persuade the will to alter its purposes, and to alter its choice of objects.

Mens

Mens not considering things that concern their souls and another life, when yet they can and do consider things that relate to the animal life, is justly imputed to the faultiness of their wills; they do not consider them, because they will not, not because they cannot; it is because they have no propension of will to engage their considerative faculties about those things. *They turn back from God*, and why? but because *they will not consider any of his ways*, *John* 34.27. So that until God do take off this strong Bias which is upon mens will, they will not consider those things, which if they did seriously consider, would certainly change the bent and motion of their wills.

Now how Almighty God does take off this strong influence which the will hath upon the mind to keep it from considering things of greatest importance, I have shewed, at least, in great part in Chap. 1. of this Discourse; to wit, by raising in the mind such *sense* of guilt and danger in reference to the soul,

soul, as does counterpoise the prejudices which proceed from the will against such consideration. For when the will cannot give ease to the mind by putting it upon the consideration of any thing else than those which concern the soul and a future state, then in reference to the mans own relief, it becomes content that the mind should seek its ease, by considerations of another nature than what it had been before accustomed to. And thus the will becomes at the least passive as to those considerations and notices which proceed from an awakened and enlightned mind.

2. By the wills being made thus passive, it comes, together with the understanding, to taste and feel the goodness and sweetness of those things whereof the great motives of the Gospel are made, the usefulness of them to make a man happy, beyond any thing it ever tasted before. *The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat,* as *Elihu* speaks, *Job* 34. 3. The outward

ward ſenſe of the body being put for the internal ſenſe of the mind touching thoſe things that come into it by the ear. The mind by conſidering what a man hears, taſteth whether it be good or bad, as he doth his meat by his palate. Thus the ſuperlative goodneſs of the great things of the Goſpel come to be taſted both by the underſtanding and the will, by a diligent and due conſideration of them, which is the minds chewing them. We read of mens *taſting the heavenly gift*, their *taſting the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come*, *Heb.* 6.4,5. of the *taſting that the Lord is gracious*, 1 *Pet.*2.3. of holy *Davids* ſaying, that Gods Word was *ſweeter to his taſte than honey to his mouth*; and of *Jobs* ſaying how he *eſteemed it more than his neceſſary food*; and of the Prophet *Jeremiahs eating of it*, and of his finding it thereupon *the joy, and the rejoicing of his heart*. However theſe, or ſome of theſe ſayings may be meant of a higher degree of this taſte, than men meet with upon the firſt change that is

made upon their mind and will, yet doubtless, something of this spiritual relish is found upon the mind and will of every true Convert, upon his first effectual turning, and does contribute to the forming of those good resolutions which are taken hereupon; which brings me to the next thing:

3. The will by having received some taste of the superlative goodness of the great and precious promises of the Gospel touching pardon of sin and eternal life, comes thereby to be reconciled to the terms or condition on which those great benefits are promised, and to take up a resolution of endeavouring to perform those terms or that condition. Though it be a great thing for a man to resolve upon such a thing as to turn his back upon his formerly beloved vanities, and to betake himself to the study and practice of other kind of things, from which he hath been willingly and wilfully estranged, yet the sense of the danger of refusing to do so, and the hope of the greatness

of

of the benefits he shall receive if he does, prevails with the will to resolve upon it against all that which would draw it another way, God also *strengthening him* thereunto, *with might by his Spirit in the inner man.* And this he does, at least in great part, by making the great motives of the Gospel present to his mind, and by keeping them under his consideration, and drawing his thoughts frequently upon them.

4. That which is yet more difficult, and wherein the Divine Assistance is greatly needful, is to *do* as well as to will, and *to put in execution* those good purposes when they have been raised and formed in the will. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not, Rom.* 7. 18. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak, Mat.* 26. 41. Such sayings as these shew it to be a harder matter to do indeed, than it is to purpose to do.

There are many good purposes in men which stick in the birth, prove abortive, and never come into act for want of strength in the will [in which they were conceived] to bring them forth. Few are so bad but that at some times and in some good mood they resolve to amend and become better, when the Spirit of God is at work on their miuds and consciences to awaken them: but these purposes wear off and die within most men, and never come to effect for want of strength and firmness. Many would be better that yet remain bad, if they could be so with wishing and desiring, without resolving to put themselves to the trouble of crossing their own corrupt humour, and of denying the unreasonable cravings of the flesh. And those that do resolve upon those labours and endeavours which are necessary to thorow conversion of soul, yet many times find a great strife within themselves, between the taking up of such resolutions, and the putting them in execution; they meet with great and strong

ſtrong ſolicitations from the fleſh from the ſenſitive appetites, to let fall ſuch reſolutions, and great diſcouragements ſet before them alſo to hedge up the way with thorns. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, and the Devil aſſiſteth the Fleſh all he can with his ſuggeſtions: ſo that it becomes a matter of great difficulty for mens purpoſes and reſolutions in this kind, to hold out, and to make their way thorow all this oppoſition. And when ever this difficulty is overcome, and mens reſolutions become ſo ſtrong as to carry them through all this oppoſition, it is to be attributed to God, it is becauſe God *worketh* in them to *will and to do* of his good pleaſure, *Phil.*2.13.

The Spirit of God then we ſee worketh in men to do, by working in them ſtrength of reſolution in willing to do, thereby drawing that out into actual performance which had been reſolved on. Bnt I do not ſay that the Spirit of God doth enable ſuch mens performance to anſwer their reſolu-

tions to the height presently, and at the first. That which the Spirit of God does enable men at first to do in this case, is honestly, really, and sincerely to set upon the work resolved on; that is, sincerely to endeavour to reform, amend, and to become new men; to strive against all known sin, and to endeavour to do all known duty as well as they can; but the victory is got but by degrees.

There is a great difference between a mans getting the victory over those oppositions of Flesh, World, and Devil, which withstood him in his beginning, when he was setting upon the work of amendment of life, and his destroying those enemies of his soul so as that they shall no more annoy him, or endanger his falling short of the happiness he seeks: (which to be sure they will, notwithstanding his first victory, unless he pursue that victory by seeking the utter ruine and destruction of them, by keeping up a continual war against them. The former victory

I reckon is perfectly obtained when men are not prevailed upon by any oppoſition whatſoever, but that they will and do ſeriouſly, and ſincerely, and actually engage in a conſcientious obſervation of the ſeveral duties of Chriſtianity, enjoined by our Saviour both in abſtaining from evil, and in doing good.

But the latter victory is obtained but by degrees, as the new man grows ſtronger and ſtronger, and the old man weaker and weaker, like the houſe of *Saul* and *David*. A man I conceive does commence ſincere Chriſtian and real Diſciple of Chriſt when he has obtained the firſt victory, but cannot approve himſelf to God and his own conſcience to be and to continue ſuch, farther than he follows his enterprize, and purſues that victory by endeavouring the *deſtruction of the whole body of ſin*, and by aſpiring after a *ſtanding compleat in all the will of God*.

When our Saviour said (*Luke* 12.47. *That servant which knew his Lords will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes:* we see the least that will secure a man from this threatning of our Lord, is a mans preparing himself to do according to his Lords will. And if by preparing himself be meant a putting himself in the best posture he can to do it, by using the best means and helps he can in order to it, and then doing it as well as he can, though not so well as he would; then it seems very probable that for a man thus to prepare himself to do his Lords will, will not onely secure him from being beaten as a disobedient servant, but also render him acceptable to his Lord in such his preparation to please him.

And I think the Apostles rule will hold in reference to this, though mentioned but upon a particular occasion; that of Alms-giving, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted accor-*

according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. So long as a mans doing his Lords will as well as his alms, does but anſwer his ability and capacity, and proceeds from a *willing mind*, a mind inclined and bent to do better, as he to give a better alms if he could; this mans endeavour and ſervice will be no more rejected becauſe it is ſo mean, than the poor widows two mites were, but be accepted becauſe it holds ſome proportion with his ability, and proceeds from a mind and will, that would have put the man upon doing more if he could have done it. And this indeed is in a favourable ſenſe, a mans ſerving his Lord and Maſter *with all his might*, with all that little ſtrength which he hath.

And yet in this, Almighty God does not, I conceive, weigh men in reference to their performance or endeavours to perform, by grains and ſcruples. For *he knows whereof we are made, and how we are but duſt*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks.

He

He considers the composition of our nature, Flesh as well as Spirit, and the constitution and complexion thereof, and how the motions and activity of the Spirit are limited and straightned by the body to which it is united. He considers all the disadvantages we are under from without us, as of times and places where the providence of God hath cast us, and of education, company, and acquaintance, and the like; he considers all a mans circumstances, and then according to the goodness and benignity of his nature, makes allowances in estimating a man according to his endeavours and performances. He is not extream in marking what is done amiss. *He pities us as a Father pities his children, and spares us as a man spares his own Son that serves him*, if the Bias of our will and constant endeavours do but stand right towards him, and if our endeavours do but hold some good proportion to that assistance we receive from him. An instance of all which we have in the character which the Scripture gives of *David*, when it saith,

saith, *He turned not aside from any thing commanded by God, all his dayes except in the matter of Uriah*, 1 *Kings* 15. 5.

These things I note by the way, to the end we might be the better able to make some judgment not onely of what assistance men receive from God when he worketh in them both to will and to do, but also *what that willing and doing is*, which we may hope will through grace, be accepted for a performance of that condition, to which the promise of pardon and life is made.

And thus we have seen in some measure, how Almighty God by the assistance of his grace, brings about that change both in the mind and manners of men, by which the condition of his promise of pardon and life is performed. He awakens mens fears by making them sensible of their danger by reason of sin. And these *fears*, especially when they grow any thing strong,

strong, *prevail* against those *prejudices* which make men unwilling to consider the concernments of their souls and things relating to another life. And by considering, men come through Gods further assistance to have new apprehensions of things, to see and to judge of things as they are, and then to chuse or refuse them according to that judgment.

God does not give men new faculties of understanding and will: he only assists those faculties to throw off that burden which oppressed them, to break those fetters by which they were bound, and so to restore them by degrees to their native liberty of acting regularly. Hence the Scripture calls this work of God upon the soul, a being *renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*, *Col.*3.10. that is, to a right judgment of things wherein the soul of man resembled its Maker. It is termed *a being renewed in the Spirit of the mind*, *Ephes.*4. 23. *a being transformed by the renewing of the*

the mind, Rom.12.2. *and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit.3.5.

That which is moſt connatural to the will in man, is to chuſe his happineſs. It is not in mans power to chuſe to be miſerable under that notion, but whenever he does ſo, its under the notion of good. And this is the corruption that cleaves to man in his degenerate ſtate, to chuſe that which is evil under the notion of good; and likewiſe to chuſe an inferiour good with a greater degree of *volition* than a good that is ſuperiour. As when a temporal good, and the good of the body, is choſen with a greater ſtrength and power of willing, than an eternal good, and the good of the ſoul.

Now that which God does in regenerating man, is the vouchſafing him ſuch *aſſiſtance*, as by which his *mind is reſtored* to a power and liberty of making *right judgment* of things, to judge that to be good which is ſo, and that to be evil which is ſo. And then to make

make a right judgment between an inferiour and a superiour good, which the Apostle calls a *proving or trying things that differ, and the approving of things that are excellent*, Phil. 1. 9. That which he does therein in reference to the *will*, is to enable it in its election and rejection of things, to *be governed* by the rectified *judgment of the mind*, to be no longer imposed upon by the irregularity of the sensitive appetites unto which it had been in bondage, while they usurped the Throne, the place and office of the understanding and judgment in giving laws to the will what it should chuse and what it should refuse. For so far as the will is renewed, it chuses and refuses, according to the laws and dictates of an enlightned mind and rectified judgment, and no longer by the blind appetites and propensions of sense. When ever an inferiour and superiour good come in competition, the will so far as renewed, will still chuse that which is superiour. And when two evils come in competition, a greater

ter and a leſs, the evil of ſinning, and the evil of ſuffering, the will as renewed chuſes the leſs.

But in all this change made in the mind and will, there is *no unnatural force* put upon the faculties, but on the contrary, they are thereby *relieved* againſt an unnatural force which had been put upon them. They had by an unnatural force been turned aſide from acting regularly to the making of wrong judgment of things, and wrong elections of them. It was an unnatural force which put the ſenſual appetites and paſſions into the place of governing the will in her reſolutions and elections. And Gods work in tranſforming and renewing the ſoul, is but his relieving and freeing it from theſe tyrannical impoſitions, and reſtoring the faculties in their ſeveral operations to their priſtine liberty and order: the mind to judge of things as they are, and the will to ſubmit her ſelf in her reſolutions and elections, to the government of the judgment now rectified:

fied: and the appetites and passions to conform themselves to the elections and resolutions of the will under the conduct of such a rectified judgment. And when things are thus right in the soul, which is the fountain and spring of external actions, the life and conversation cannot in the main and in the general course of it, but be regular also.

The doing of all this, the working so great a change in the soul, will indeed require not onely the operation of Gods word, but the operation of the hand of his power also, to bring every thing into its right place, and each faculty to do its own work. For the faculties of the soul, mind, and will, are enfeebled by sin, which is the sickness of the soul, as mens limbs are by sickness of the body, so that they cannot do that which otherwise would be natural, easie, and pleasant to them, until God himself is pleased to convey strength into them, to *strengthen men with strength in their souls*, as the Psalmist speaks: Yet

Yet it must be confessed that God does not to effect this cure, give this strength in so miraculous a manner as strength and *perfect soundness* was given to the Cripple, *Acts* 3. which was done in an instant, but in a more leisurely and gradual way; the seed which he sows in the soul, comes to perfection by degrees, *first the blade, then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear*, *Mark* 4. the work of thorow-conversion is not begun and finished all in an instant ordinarily, but is usually carried on in such a slow and regular process, as if it were wholly contrived and wrought by the power of our own reason, as a late judicious Author well expresseth it.

Chap. VI.

Of Gods assisting those that perish, towards their performing the condition of the promise of Salvation; and of their refusing to make use of that assistance; and of their perishing for that reason. Of Gods not hindering men from refusing his assistance, and of the reason why.

IT is of no small concernment to satisfie our minds in this, to wit, that it is not for want of mercy and goodness in God towards those that perish, that yet they do perish. And if we consider how that God does assist even those that perish, towards their performing the condition on which salvation is promised, until that assistance is rejected, and that their perishing proceeds from their refusing to use that assistance, and the reason why God does not hinder them by the irresistibleness

ſiſtibleneſs of his grace from refuſing that aſſiſtance, it will go far toward ſuch a ſatisfaction.

1. I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, and ſhew that God does aſſiſt thoſe that periſh, towards their performing the condition on which ſalvation is promiſed. This I ſuppoſe will appear more than probable when theſe things following ſhall be conſidered.

1. The holy Scriptures acquaint us, that *God would have all men to be ſaved and come to the knowledge of the Truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. *That he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. Now ſince neither of theſe can be attained without Gods aſſiſtance, how can it be ſaid that he would have *all men* to come to repentance, if he did not afford them his aſſiſtance towards it? How can his willingneſs on this behalf be known or diſcerned, if he ſhould with-hold that aſſiſtance from any of them, without which that cannot be done,

which yet he says he would have done?

2. The same mercy and grace which inclined God the Father to give his Son, and the Son to give himself a ransom *for all*, cannot as we may well conceive, but incline him to afford unto *all* his *preparatory assistance* towards performing that condition, without which his giving of Christ for all, would be ineffectual to their salvation. His giving his Son for all, which is the greater gift, infers his willingness to vouchsafe to all the less also, so long as his end in giving the greater will be lost, unless he give the lesser also.

3. If God did not begin to assist even those that perish, to perform the condition of the promise, until that assistance has been refused and opposed, I would fain know how they can be left *without excuse* when they come to be condemned for not repenting, unless we could suppose them able

able of themſelves to repent without Divine Aſſiſtance, which yet the Scriptures will not ſuffer us to ſuppoſe. For if they could as well plead that Divine Aſſiſtance had *never* been afforded them, but *always with-held* from them, as they may plead the *impoſſibility* of their performing the condition of the promiſe without Divine Aſſiſtance, it would be an excuſe, why they did not repent and believe, and a great one too.

4. How can it be ſaid, which yet is uſually and generally affirmed, that under the New Covenant, ſalvation is granted to all men that do not wilfully refuſe it, if aſſiſtance to perform the condition, were not afforded unto all, as well as the promiſe of it is on that condition; until they wilfully refuſe to make uſe of that aſſiſtance? For men can no more perform the condition on which ſalvation is promiſed, without Divine Aſſiſtance, than they can be ſaved without performing that condition: and conſequently Salva-

tion cannot be said to be offered to all, unless Divine Assistance be afforded to all likewise.

5. It is no wise probable that God should require and expect repentance from *all* men, which yet he does, *Act.* 17. 30. or that he should account them culpable if they do not repent, if he did not afford unto *all*, such means and assistance as by which they may be able to repent. No wise or good man will require such work to be done by his Servants, without furnishing them with such Tools, without which it cannot be done: much less will God require repentance from all men, unless he had vouchsafed such assistance unto all, as by which repentance might be no impossible thing to them.

6. It is no wise likely that since Christ died for all, but that it was that all might have the benefit of his death upon one condition or other: Nor is it any whit more probable that God should promise this benefit upon an im-

impossible condition. For men to promise any thing to men upon impossible conditions, is but *trifling*, and who dare fasten any thing like it on God? And yet for God to promise the benefit of Christs death unto all, upon condition of repentance, would be to promise it upon an impossible condition, unless he did afford unto all his assistance towards it.

7. In the days of the Old World the Spirit of God by the preaching of *Noah*, by his long suffering, and by his operations on mens minds, did *strive* with the then whole World to bring them to repentance, and even with the *spirits* which afterward were *in prison for their disobedience*, *Gen.* 6.3. compared with 1 *Pet.*3.19,20. which *striving* with them by the *Spirit of God*, was his *assisting* of them towards their repentance. And if God did afford his assistance unto all before the Floud to bring them to repentance, it is no wise likely but that he hath done, and does so to all likewise after the floud.

8. Our Saviour in his Discourse wherein he shewed that no man *could come* to him, except he were *prepared* by the Father, said, *It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God, John* 6. 45. And it no ways follows that all are not taught of God, because all do not learn, as is shewed in another place. Many are taught when but few learn, as many are called when but few are chosen. And if all are taught of God, then all have a preparatory assistance from him.

9. We cannot reasonably think but that God who is the lover of Souls, is more ready to apply himself to the minds of all men, to dispose them to what tends to their salvation, till by their often opposition they provoke him to leave them as incurable, than the Devil the Evil Spirit is to dispose them to what tends to their destruction; and yet this evil Spirit which works in the children of disobedience, is as we have reason to believe, busie with the minds of all men for their hurt.

10. When

10. When it is said by St. *Stephen* concerning the disobedient Jews, *Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye, Acts* 7. 51. it is evident that the Holy Ghost had been attempting and making many Essays upon their minds, as bad as they were, in order to the reclaiming them; otherwise the Holy Ghost could not be said to have been resisted by them. The Holy Ghost doubtless did often suggest to them that the way in which they walked, was *evil in the nature of it, and destructive in its tendency*, such as was altogether unsafe for them, and tending to their ruine. For so much is signified in reference to their Fathers, by that in *Nehem.* 9. 30. *Many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by the Spirit in thy Prophets. Thou testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy Law*, as it is in *Verse* 29. and so escape the misery they were otherwise bringing upon themselves. And this the Spirit of God did out of *compassion* to them: *He sent to them by his Messenger*

sengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place. 2 *Chron.* 36.15.

11. *The goodness and long-suffering of God*, which he exerciseth towards the worst of men, carries in it *the nature of Divine Assistance* towards their repenting. *It leads to repentance*, according to that of S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 2. 4. And Gods leading men to repentance, is certainly his assisting them towards it. By his long suffering he gives them opportunity to bethink themselves, and upon second thoughts to repent; and not onely so, but by it he invites them to repent: for that is the language of Gods forbearance, if men would but consider that they might understand it.

For, for what other end can men think that God forbears to cut them off after they have once deserved it? Surely, it is not that they might sin the more, and that so their punishment might

might be the greater; I believe hardly any wicked men can think so. And if not for that, for what else can they think it to be, but that they might have time to repent? But whether they apprehend it and consider it or no, it is so, he spares them for that very reason. *He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* 2 *Pet.*3.9. And is it likely that God who spares them that they may repent, will deny them his grace, without which he knows they cannot? To what purpose should he spare them to repent, when he knows they cannot, if he were resolved not to enable them to it?

And as the forbearance, so the *goodness* of God *leadeth to repentance.* For when sinners obnoxious to God, are not onely spared by him, but also made partakers of the effects of his goodness and kindness (according to that of our Saviour, *he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, Luke* 6.35.) they must needs con-

conclude, if they consider it, that he does not delight in their misery as such, though they have deserved evil and not good at his hands, but that by his kindness he would gain upon them and draw them to better thoughts of him, and to a better behaviour towards him. *He left not himself without witness* (*viz.* of his seeking *to draw all Nations from walking in their own ways*) *in that he did good, and gave them rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness*, *Acts* 14.17.

If any conclude from Gods forbearance and goodness to wicked men, that he is not displeased with their evil ways, no more than they themselves are; like those, *Psal.* 50.20. *These things thou hast done, and I kept silence*, saith God, *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self*: I say, if any can persuade themselves thus to conclude, it must be onely profligate wretches, sinners of no ordinary rank. For very Heathens, and such as the

the Apoſtle brands with a very black character, thought otherwiſe. *Their thoughts did not onely accuſe them, but they knew the judgment of God*, as he ſays, *that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death*; and therefore ſought to appeaſe God by their ſacrifices. And this is evidence enough, that ſuch as they, as bad as they were, did not think God was not diſpleaſed with their evil ways, or that he did forbear them upon that account.

Now this long-ſuffering and this goodneſs of God, is a piece of Divine Aſſiſtance toward repentance, which God vouchſafeth even to the Heathen and barbarous Nations. And however this aſſiſtance may be much *inferiour* to what is vouchſafed them who have the *Oracles of God* among them; yet this, with the ſecret operation of God by impreſſing principles of natural Religion upon the minds of ſuch, have, as I have ſhewed, ſo far prevailed upon many of them, as that they have been thereby prepared to receive and be-

believe the Gospel, as soon as it hath been sufficiently revealed and made known to them: and so far also as in the mean time to become *morally religious* in devotion towards God, and in justice and charity towards men.

This seems very evident in those uncircumcised Gentiles, which are stiled *Religious Proselytes*, Act. 13. 43. *men fearing God*, ver. 16. 26. *devout men*, Act. 10. 7. as Dr. *Hammond* hath observed in his Notes upon *Acts* 10. 2. Of which sort were *Cornelius* and the *Eunuch*. And when the Lord said to S. *Paul* in a Vision at *Corinth*, *I have much people in this City*, as a reason why he would have him continue preaching there, notwithstanding the Jews in that place opposed themselves and blasphemed, *Acts* 18. 10. I question not but he meant it of such Gentiles as were in the first degree morally religiously disposed, and so were prepared to receive the Faith of the Gospel, as other such so prepared had done before them. And of such as

these,

these, onely further improved in morality, I suppose S. *Paul* speaks, *Rom.* 2.26. when he saith, *If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* And in reference to such it was that S. *Peter* also said, *I perceive of a truth that God is no respecter of persons, but in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts 10. 34, 35.

These several considerations tend, you see, to evince, that God does not deny his preparatory assistance to any of those that perish: and that therefore their perishing is not for want of so much mercy in God towards them, as by which their perishing might have been prevented, had they not refused and opposed the mercy of God it self towards them, in that way and method of saving, in which he saves others that are saved. *God hath concluded all under unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*, *Rom.* 11.32. And those who will not be saved

saved by the mercy of God in that *way and method* of his mercy in which he saves those that are saved; nor unless they can be saved by Gods mercy in a way of their *own chusing*, in opposition to Gods, must sit down with their own choice, and go without that salvation which they might have had if they would, and which God of his compassion, did more than barely offer them, while his Spirit did strive with them, as it did with them of the Old World. These are they that *receive the grace of God in vain*, against whose folly *S. Paul* does with great seriousness and earnestness beseech and admonish men, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. And truly they are men of a strange presumption, that can promise themselves that which God never promised them; as if God should for their sakes, alter his ordinary method of his mercy in saving men, to save them, when he hath many and many times peremptorily declared the contrary in the Scriptures of truth. They doubtless that can do thus, are the men the Scripture speaks of, *that despise their*

own

own souls, that set little by them, and concern themselves little about them.

By the reasons given to induce a persuasion that God affords his preparatory assistance unto all, I do not say, nor mean, that he does vouchsafe it to all equally and alike. For the scope of our Saviours Parable, I conceive, doth intimate the contrary, when he said, *To one is delivered one talent, to another two, and to another five*, Mat. 25. But then if he which hath but the least, doth but use that for the end for which he received it, he seems by parity of reason to be capable of being dealt with as a faithful servant in opposition to him who is doomed as slothful, though he does not do so much as he does who hath received more. He that gained but two talents by using the two which he had received, was pronounced a faithful servant, and dealt with as such, as well as he who gained five with using the five which were delivered him. So that we see a mans faithfulness and unfaithfulness is esti-

mated by his using or not using what is afforded him, for the end for which it is vouchsafed him. If he that hath but one talent, gain though it be but one, with using that one he hath received, he, we may suppose, will be dealt with as a faithful servant, as well as he that gains two with two, or five with five. If a mans repentance, faith, and usefulness in the World, do but hold some good proportion to the measure and degree of assistance he hath from God in means and helps external and internal, though both the one and the other be but of the lesser size, yet we cannot deny such to be capable of better usage from God than such as are, and will be sentenced for impenitent, unfaithful, and unprofitable. We cannot say that so little will make a man which hath more means and helps, capable of the reward of a faithful servant, as will another which hath not so much. For *to whom much is given, much will be required, and to whom men commit much, of him they ask the more,* saith our Saviour, *Luke* 12. 48. That pro-

probably will not be ſufficient to ſave a man who enjoys the Goſpel, which may be ſufficient to ſave ſuch a one as *Cornelius* was before the Goſpel was made known to him. *God is a God of knowledge and judgment, by him actions are weighed*, and all circumſtances of a mans caſe conſidered. And doubtleſs, God makes larger allowances in eſtimating the goodneſs of a mans performances that hath leſs aſſiſtance, than he doth in eſtimating his for good that hath more.

This I have here noted the rather, to the end we who have the Goſpel, may have the more charitable opinion concerning the ſtate and condition of ſome of them which have it not: and likewiſe to put them in mind who *enjoy more means*, and therein more aſſiſtance from God than others, how abſolutely neceſſary it is for them to *do more than others*, to the obtaining from God, the approbation of good and faithful ſervants, and ſuch as have performed the condition of the promiſe.

2. Having now made out the first of the things proposed, *viz.* That God doth assist even those that perish, towards their performing the condition on which pardon and life are promised, until that assistance is rejected; I proceed now to the second. Which is to shew that the *reason* why men are deprived of the pardon and salvation purchased by our Saviour, is *founded in* their *refusing to make use of Gods assisting grace*, through which otherwise they might have been enabled to have performed the condition, on which pardon and life are promised.

Whatever means God useth, tending to awaken, direct, or persuade men to repent, reform, and amend, are his *aids* and *assistances* vouchsafed them to that end. And such are his reproofs, instructions, commands, counsels, threatnings, and promises, when *applied by his Spirit unto the minds of men.*

Now then, mens *refusing* to hearken to, and to consider these things, or to comply with them, and their endeavouring

vouring not to be affected with them, or moved by them, is their *refusing to be assisted by God* to perform the condition of the promise.

And upon this very thing is both the wickedness of men and their destruction charged in Scripture, and that under a great variety of expression. Sometimes it is termed a *not enclining the ear to hear*, a *not hearkening*, a *refusing to hear*, a *refusing to return*, a *stopping the ears that they might not hear*, a *closing the eyes that they may not see*, a *rejecting of the word of the Lord, and of the counsel of God against themselves.*

These things which are spoken of the outward senses, do signifie and represent the posture of bad mens minds, when they refuse to set *their hearts* to what God says or does to them. *They seeing see not, and hearing they hear not*, as our Saviour expresseth it, *Mat.* 13. 13. as men are said to do, when their minds are not at all busied or concerned with the things they hear or see.

And when it is so with them, they are no more moved or affected with the things they see or hear, than as if they had not seen nor heard them at all.

And when the Scripture saith that they *stop their ears that they may not hear*, this signifies somewhat more, to wit, the *arming* themselves against what is said, so that the things spoken may not enter their souls, nor at all affect them, and is much what the same thing which the Scripture means by mens hardening themselves and stiffening their necks. These are so far from endeavouring to comply with Gods applications to them, for the altering their way and course of life, that they are afraid of being affected with or converted by any thing that may be spoken or done to them. *Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them*, saith our Lord concerning them, *Matt.* 13.15. It

It is true indeed, *No man can come to the Son, except it be given him of the Father, and except the Father draw him, John* 6.44,65. But then the *reason* why men are not drawn so, as to be *prepared* to come to the Son so soon as he is sufficiently revealed to them, is because they *refuse* to be so. The Wisdom of God speaks after this manner. *I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof; the turning away of the simple shall slay them, Prov.* 1. 24. God we see, calls and stretcheth out his hands to sinners; he reproves, he counsels and persuades; *and this is his drawing.* But many of those whom he thus draws, they we see refuse, they regard not, they despise, they turn away: and this is their *refusing and rejecting Gods assistance*, it is their refusing to be drawn; and it is this their refusing and turning away that *slayes them. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we*

escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Heb.12.25. *How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not*, saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 23.37. And again, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life, John* 5. 40.

3. We may perceive by all this, that Gods method of drawing men, is not to work upon them in an *irresistible* manner; for if it were, there would be no place left to draw back or to refuse: which yet by the Scriptures and experimental observation, we see there is.

But this will further appear when we consider that the same preparatory grace and assistance from God, which will dispose some to repentance, proves ineffectual to others, which could not be, if repentance were wrought in an irresistible manner and way. Our Saviour hath told us for instance, that if *Tyre and Sidon* had but had the same means of repentance vouchsafed unto them, which *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* had, they,

they would have repented, when yet *Corazin* and *Bethſaida* did not. *Mat.* 11.21. *Wo unto thee Corazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes.* Nay a leſs degree and proportion of means will work repentance in ſome, when a greater will not in others. Which is an evident proof that repentance may be wrought by a leſs proportion of means than that which is irreſiſtible; otherwiſe that which is irreſiſtible in its operation, may be reſiſted, which is a contradiction in terms. The men of *Nineveh* repented at the preaching of *Jonas*, when the obſtinate Jews did not repent, though they had more powerful means vouchſafed them to bring them to it than the men of *Nineveh* had, to wit, the preaching and many mighty miracles of our Saviour; which was the reaſon why our Saviour ſaid, the men of *Nineveh* ſhould riſe in judgment againſt them, and condemn them, *Mat.* 12.41. *The men of Nineveh*

veh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. That which is or may be made ineffectual to its end, is not irresistible in its operation: but the means of repentance vouchsafed the unbelieving Jews, was made ineffectual by them as to their repentance, though more and greater than the men of *Nineveh* had, by which repentance was wrought in them. By which it is manifest that the repentance of the Ninevites was not wrought by an irresistible operation; because the means used to bring the unbelieving Jews to repentance, was greater than that the Ninevites had, and yet was resisted.

Though I do not say or think that God doth always give the same degree of assistance to all persons in like cases, (he doth what he will with his own) it is enough he gives sufficient to all; yet the *reason of the different event* of the *same* means of grace vouchsafed to

to those that do not repent, and to those that do, ordinarily so far as we can judge, lies in the *greater degree of untractableness* and unteachableness which is found in the one, than is found in the other, by means whereof the same applications and assistances from God, are rendred ineffectual to the one, which are not so to the other. But if the method and manner of Gods operation in working repentance and faith, were irresistible, no degree of obstinacy in men, could withstand it, or render it ineffectual.

There is an opinion indeed much different from this, and which hath obtained even among many good and worthy men, which does suppose the reason of the different event of Gods applications to men, to lie in the different manner of his applying himself to them. As when we are invited by it to conceive, that the reason why some repent and others do not, is because God works it *irresistibly* in the one, when he refuses to do so in the other.

other. The ill consequents of which opinion we may well suppose they were no whit aware of who were the first promoters of it, and were far enough from owning them, though they held fast the opinion which does infer them. But yet if the things necessarily consequent upon this opinion prove it to be bad, it can be no breach of any rule of charity or modesty to mention them upon so fair an occasion as this now before us, but rather the contrary if I should not, and may consist well enough with that veneration I have for the memory of many of those who have embraced it.

This opinion renders the damnation of such as perish impossible for them ever to have escaped after they had once sinned. For if nothing less than Gods *irresistible* operation be sufficient to bring sinners to repentance, then would it have been impossible for any that perish to have prevented it, because no such means of repentance was ever vouchsafed them; for if it had, they

they could not but have repented as well as any. This opinion therefore tends to leſſen the grace and mercy of God in that proviſion which he hath made for the redemption of the World, as if it were not ſufficient for the ſalvation of any, but ſuch as are, and ſhall be actually and eventually ſaved. It implies and ſuppoſes that the reaſon why ſuch as periſh are not ſaved by the death of Chriſt as well as others, is for want of ſo much compaſſion in God towards them, as to aſſiſt them to perform the condition on which ſuch ſalvation is purchaſed and promiſed. Whereas Almighty God hath not onely given his Son to be a propitiation for the ſin of the whole World, but hath alſo afforded ſuch aſſiſtance unto all, as by which they might have come to perform that condition upon which the promiſe of ſalvation is made, as I have before endeavored to ſhew. It does not conſiſt with the plain and obvious ſenſe of ſuch Scriptures as tell us, that *God is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.*

For

For how can we conceive any such willingness in God concerning those who yet do perish, if he should wholly have refused them that assistance without which it was impossible they should repent and escape perishing?

An opinion it seems to be, if it were true, which would render all Gods applications to those that perish, to have prevented their perishing, useless and insignificant. For to what end should other means be used to bring those to repentance who in the issue do not repent, if no other means be sufficient to effect it in them, but such an irresistible operation of God as he never intended them? And how ill a representation would it make of God, if he according to the tenor of this opinion, should at last condemn men for not repenting, and for not believing and obeying the Gospel, when it was impossible they should, so long as God refused to work these graces irresistibly in them.

And

And truly if those that perish had so much to plead in *excuse* for themselves, why they did not repent under all the mighty motives they had to *persuade* them to it, and other means to *assist* them in it, it would abate or rather quite take away a great part of the torments of the damned, which do arise from a sense of their gross, wilful and obstinate neglect to hearken to those powerful motives they once had to persuade them to repent, and to make use of those helps and means they once had to assist them in it. If they could but plead the impossibility of their repenting upon the account of Gods not vouchsafing them the irresistible operations of his grace and Spirit, which was granted to all others that escape perishing, it would in a great measure at least, abate the tormenting gnawing of the worm that never dieth. For then it would leave no place for those gripes of conscience, fierce self-accusations, and intolerable self-reflections, which proceed from the remembrance and consideration of the loss of the oppor-

opportunity they once had given them from God, of escaping the misery they have brought upon themselves, wherewith they are perpetually racked. For if they could believe that all they could have done here in this life towards the escaping of that miserable state, would have availed them nothing, but that it depended wholly upon the irresistible operation of God upon them, which was altogether out of their power, they might perhaps turn their rage against Almighty God, for not affording them the same means of escaping, as he had done others that were sinners as well as themselves; but would hardly reflect upon themselves for not doing that which was impossible for them to have done. This ill consequence alone of the opinion under consideration, if there were no other, were enough one would think, to detect the crookedness and deformity of it, which yet, as I have said, hath obtained so long as it hath done among many good men as well as others. And indeed should this opinion

nion generally obtain among bad men, it would in all probability, be a dangerous temptation upon them, to neglect doing what they might do to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to expect that if God intends to save them, that one time or other he should come with such power upon them to convert them, as that they should not be able to withstand it.

4. But if this should run in the mind of any, that God could, if he would, hinder men from refusing his assistance, and prevent the perishing of any by working repentance in all by the irresistible operations of his grace: I shall answer such a thought thus: That it is possible for God to do, whatever it is possible for him to will should be done. Gods power hath no other bounds set to it, but his own Will. *Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places*, Psal. 135. 6. But then it is impossible for him to will any thing, or to do any thing which is not perfectly

agreeable to his own infinite wisdom, by which he *regulates his will and all the exertions of his power.* For *he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*, *Ephes.* 1. 11. Not according to the prerogative or absoluteness of his will simply considered, but according to his will regulated and governed by infinite wisdom and counsel. *The Kings strength loveth judgment*, saith the *Psalmist*, speaking of God, *Psal.* 99. 4.

So that we may truly say that God can no more do that which doth not agree with his wisdom, than he can that which doth not agree with his truth, or with his righteousness. As it is impossible for God to lie, so it is impossible for him to do any thing that does not become his wisdom.

Why could not God have done more for his Vineyard than he had done? *Isa.* 5. 4. It was not doubtless because he had already acted therein to the utmost extent of his power simply

ply and absolutely considered, but because he had done as much, all things considered, as became a wise God to do toward such a People to make them good, as there he means by his Vineyard.

S. *Mark ch.6.5.* speaking of our Saviour, saith, *that he could do no mighty work there*, to wit, in his own Country, *save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.* But why could he not do as mighty works, and as many of them in his own Country as he did in other places? Doubtless it was not for want of power, but considering the ill temper of the people there, and the vehement prejudice they had against him, he did not think it fit for him, meet or convenient to do so many, and so mighty works there, as he did elsewhere. S. *Matthew* saith, *he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief, chap.* 13.58. Lo here we see the wisdom of our Saviour restraining the acting of his power in things tending to work faith and repentance in men.

Every one knows that it is matter of *wisdom* in a Governour to try men by committing to them lesser trusts at first. And if they quit themselves well under those, then to commit greater trusts to them, and so to prefer them by degrees. But if they miscarry under those lesser trusts, they do not onely forbear committing to them greater, but also withdraw from them those lesser trusts which had been committed to them. And this they do upon that rational principle mentioned by our Saviour, *Luke* 16.10. *He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much; and he which is unfaithful in the least, will be unfaithful in much.*

And according to this rule of wisdom, God himself proceeds ordinarily, in vouchsafing his assistances unto men, in order to their performing the condition of the promise, as our Saviour hath told us, *Mat.*13.12. and repeated the same, *chap.*25.29. in that saying; *To every one that hath shall be given, and he*

he shall have abundance; and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. God begins with men by awakening their natural principles of Religion, in causing thoughts to arise in their minds about their future state, and what may become of their souls when this life is over, and about the tendency of good and evil ways. And when this operation of God upon their minds is not slighted but attended to, and thoughts of this nature revolved in their minds, so that they do but *incline* to amend their lives, and to take some care of their souls, then God comes in with more and further assistance, and so on, if that be attended to also, until he hath wrought those first *inclinations into resolutions, and then those resolutions into actual endeavours*, till at last he brings them up to a performance of the condition of the promise.

But if men make no use of these lesser beginnings of God with them in those preparatory assistances, to the ends

aforesaid, but neglect and slight them, and at last oppose them, and harden themselves against them, so that they grow worse rather than better under them; then Almighty God, after he hath thus striven with them as long as he thinks fit, at last leaves them to themselves, by withdrawing those assistances which he had before afforded them; and so *takes away from them that which they had*, because they did not make any use of it to the end for which it was given them.

Now this method of Gods proceeding with men, is represented in Scripture as a thing which is *meet* and *worthy*; that is, which *becomes* the wisdom and righteousness of God as Governour of the World. Thus for instance in the lowest kind; when God had begun with the Gentiles to operate upon their minds by principles of natural religion, and to work in them so much knowledge and sense of himself by his works and otherwise, as to leave them *without excuse*, and yet *they did not retain*

tain God in acknowledgment, nor glorifie him as God, nor were thankful for his undeserved favours; made no good use of these lower beginnings of God with them; then *God gave them up to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections*, took off and withdrew that restraint which his beginning assistances put upon them. And this dealing of God with them, S. *Paul* calls a *recompence* which was *meet*, such as was fit and becoming the wisdom, the righteousness and goodness of God the Governour of the World, and such as was unexceptionable upon all accounts whatsoever, *Rom.* 1.27.

Those in the Parable of our Saviour who were invited to the Wedding Feast, and yet would not come, but slighted it, though they were told what preparations were made for their entertainment, are said to be *unworthy*, *Matt.* 22. 8. There would have been no *decorum* or comliness in forcing the Wedding Feast upon such, whether they would or no. The invitation sig-

nifies Gods application to the minds of men, to draw them to do that by which they might become partakers of the blessings by Christ held forth in the Gospel. Their obstinate refusing to do which, is that which makes them *unworthy* of those benefits, and of Gods *further applications* to them to make them capable of them. Thus the contumacious Jews, when they put the Gospel away from them, when it brought a tender of salvation to them, they thereby judged themselves *unworthy* of everlasting life, and *unworthy* also of Gods further applications to them: for thereupon the Apostles left them, *Acts* 13.46.

It is remarkable that our blessed Saviour himself gives thanks unto his Father for *hiding* those things from the wise and prudent, which he *revealed* unto Babes: which is an argument of the wisdom and comliness of Gods proceeding thus with men, in denying them the *after-assistances* of his grace, that have hardened themselves against

his

his first: and our Saviours words imply so much when he says, *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Mat.* 11.25,26.

But besides these testimonies from Scripture, the nature and reason of the thing shews it to be seemly and a becoming thing in God, and agreeable to the highest wisdom, for him as Governour of the World, not irresistibly to work grace in those that oppose it to the uttermost in all other applications which God makes to them. It becomes the wisdom of God to govern his Creatures according to the frame and constitution of those natures he hath given them. Man then being made an intelligent and free agent, endued with reason and judgment, and liberty of will to chuse or refuse according to the dictates of his mind and judgment, it must needs be most congruous and becoming the wisdom of God, in governing this kind of Creature, to give him such Laws as by which he might know what is fit for

for him to chuse and what to refuse. And God having given him such a nature, and such laws as are suitable to it, it is most congruous to leave him to the freedom of his own choice, and finally to determine him to the end of the way he makes choice of, whether it be life or death. And it is so more especially when death is not awarded unto any, until they have first slighted and withstood those applications which God hath made to them to warn them of their danger, and to take them off from proceeding in such ways as inevitably tend to their destruction. Now when God hath many and many a time over-done thus with men, and yet they will take no warning, nor be perswaded to concern themselves for their souls, what can be done to give such men grace, and to save them? unless God should depart from his own rules of government, and the terms he hath fixed of giving and withholding grace, of rewarding and punishing men. And this in wisdom he cannot do, since they were established by

by himself in wisdom and counsel at the first.

When our Saviour hath said it as the Law of Heaven, and the will of the Almighty, *that from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath,* meaning that which he had, but did not use; how can such men as have had assistance from God afforded them, but have made no use of it, ever hope that God should give them grace & save them? unless they could promise themselves that he is so fond of them, as for their sakes to wave his own established laws and rules, and to do it for them in a way of prerogative above his own law? A thing which they can never with any colour of reason expect, unless they could suppose their case *compassionable:* for none else but a *compassionable case* is so much as an *object of mercy.* But for such as these who harden themselves against all terms of mercy, when such terms have often and long been afforded them, together with great motives to persuade them to accept of them,

and

and assistance to enable them to do so? how can it possibly be imagined that their case can be compassionable? May they not as well think the case of the Devils themselves compassionable? yea, much better, who never had such tenders of mercy and recovery made them, nor rejected such terms as themselves have done.

Besides the administration of Justice in punishing obstinate criminals, becomes a good and wise Governour as well as Mercy, towards those whose case is truly compassionable; and so it doth God in the administration of his Government. And if such criminals as those I have now mentioned, be not the objects of Gods severity, I think there will none be found throughout the whole race of Mankind.

These things I have noted to shew for what reason we may conceive God in his wisdom doth not [though we should suppose that he could] cause the mighty motives of Religion to operate

rate effectually upon the most refractory sinners, in a way of persuasion, without destroying that liberty which is essential to the will, so as thereby to bring them to repentance.

But though I need not such an argument, nor to lay any stress upon it, yet it is thought by some impossible in the nature of the thing, for that liberty which is essential to the will as such, to be preserved, and at the same time for the will to be irresistibly constrained; these being things inconsistent. And if so, then the will cannot be irresistibly forced, without altering the humane species by that very act. And if this should be true (and I cannot see how it can fairly be denied) it would be reason enough of it self to satisfie any man, why God hath not thought fit to work grace in men by an irresistible operation.

For if God should deprive man of all liberty of will to chuse or refuse in things of a moral nature, and govern him

him meerly by his power, he would thereby take him from under his Government by laws, and then there would be no place left either for vertue or vice, future rewards or punishments, as there is not among irrational Creatures, who are under no such laws as man is, having no such nature as as man hath. It is the *spontaneousness*, the voluntariness of an action as referring to a law, that makes it vertuous or vitious, and so rewardable or punishable in another world. *If I do it willingly, I have a reward*, saith S. *Paul: Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*, saith S. *James*. It was no vertue in *Balaam* to bless *Israel*, so long as he did it onely by constraint, no more than it was in his Ass to reprove him. If you can suppose a man to do any thing meerly by virtue of an extrinsecal power without him, without the least consent of his own will, that in a *moral sense* is not the act of the man, but is wholly owing to that power, by which it was necessitated to be done.

Men

Men are too too apt to presume unduly upon the goodness and mercy of God to their own hurt, and to think it inconsistent with his *natural goodness* being infinite, not to save them if he can. And therefore to undeceive men in this matter, I have insisted the more on these things, and to shew how agreeable it is to the Divine Wisdom, for God to withdraw his assistance from men, after they have obstinately persisted in refusing and opposing it in its design upon them. And if it be agreeable to his wisdom, it cannot be disagreeable to his goodness: for it is as well goodness in God to controul Vice, as it is for him to encourage Vertue, in what way, and by what methods seems best unto him.

There is a great deal of difference between true love and goodness, and *fondness*. Men by fondness love many times without reason, and bestow their favours more than becomes them. But true and generous goodness governs it self by wisdom and prudence, and so

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it doth in God. The wisdom of God will not suffer his goodness to throw away his saving benefits upon those who by incapacitating themselves to enjoy them, have rendred themselves altogether unworthy of them. For it would disparage the wisdom, and so the goodness of God the donor, in case he should confer them upon such, because his different affection to evil and good, would be thereby in a great measure obscured, and the sinews of his Government weakned. *Honour is not seemly for a Fool*, saith the Wise-man, *Prov.* 26. 1. As it will not become the Fool himself, so neither will it become the wisdom of him that confers it, to place it on one so uncapable of it as a Fool is.

CHAP.

Chap. VII.

Of the after-assistance of the Holy Spirit, which those receive, who have been assisted already to perform the condition of the promise, as new beginners in doing so.

Those who have been assisted by God to repent, believe, and obey, and therein to begin their performance of the condition of the promise of pardon and life, do still stand in need of his further assistance to *persevere*, and to continue to do so to their lives end, and to do it more and more *excellently*. For as Believers hold their title in the benefits promised no longer than they continue to perform the condition on which the promise of them is made, so neither do they continue in the performance of that condition longer than they are assisted by God to do so. Now to persevere in performing the condition of

the promise, is as necessary for men to continue their title to the benefits promised, as their performance of that condition at the first was to begin it.

For the promise runs thus: *He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,* Mat. 24.13. *And to him that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, will I give power over the Nations,* Rev. 2.26. *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all the righteousness which he hath done shall not be mentioned: in the trespass which he hath trespassed, and in the sin which he hath sinned, in them he shall die,* Ezek. 18.24.

And as this perseverance is necessary for the reason and end aforesaid, so is *a constant and continual assistance from God* to enable the Disciples of Christ so to persevere. As the same power is necessary to continue the natural life, which first gave being to it, so is it in the spiritual life and state also. *Ye are*

are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 6.

And that which is very remarkable touching this After-assistance of which I speak, is, That a greater presence and more constant assistance of the Spirit of God is promised and vouchsafed unto men after they believe, than they had before. This appears by having *the Holy Spirit given them after*, in such a degree which they had not before; and by *Gods dwelling, and the Spirits abiding in them after*, who did not do so before.

First, those who have believed the Gospel and sincerely delivered up themselves to the conduct of it in their lives, do thereby come under that special priviledge of having the *Holy Spirit given them*, to assist, influence, and quicken them, and to carry on the

work of sanctification in them. This our Saviour promised, *John* 7. 38, 39. *Jesus cried, saying, he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: this*, saith the Evangelist, *he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Acts 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Which promises we find made good afterwards in several instances. Of the Believers it is said, *Acts* 4. 31. *that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* And *Acts* 5. 32. *We*, saith S. *Peter, are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* And S. *Paul* to the *Ephesians* saith, *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, chap. 1. 13. that is, they were marked for his, and distinguished from those that were not, by his giving them the Spirit. *For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. *Sensual not having the Spirit*, Jude 19.

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It is true indeed, those first Christians, and others after for some time, did receive the Holy Spirit in a sense that was peculiar to those times, for the confirmation and propagation of the Christian Religion, until it was well setled, and had taken some rooting in the World. As when they were in an extraordinary way enabled by the Spirit to speak with other tongues, and to perform other miraculous operations, as our Saviour had foretold they should. *For these signs*, said he, *shall follow them that believe in my name; in my name they shall cast out Devils, they shall speak with new tongues, &c. Mark* 16. 17. A more full and particular enumeration of which extraordinary gifts of the Spirit scattered among the Believers of those times, we have in 1 *Cor.* 12.

But besides these, the Believers then received in receiving the Holy Spirit, an increase of gracious qualifications, called the *fruit of the Spirit*, such *as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,*

goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, as the Apostle reckons them up, *Gal.*5.22. And in this sense the Holy Spirit hath been given to all true Believers ever since, and is now. *For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, he is no true Christian, *Rom.*8.9.

By mens having the Spirit then, and by the Spirits being given them after they believe, is meant, I conceive, a more *constant* and a more *plentiful* influence and effusion of the Spirit to change and renew them, to restore them to the likeness of God, to the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, than ever was vouchsafed them towards their believing, or by enabling them to believe at first. Before men repent, believe, or begin to obey, they have the Spirit at work in their minds indeed, to suggest to their thoughts and considerations, things of highest concernment to them, and to incline them to look after them in time, and before the day of grace and salvation is over

and

and gone. He then at times ſtands at the door and knocks, and ſtrives with every man, and vouchſafes to ſuch more and more of his aſſiſtance, until they are enabled to believe, who do not make faſt the door againſt him, but rather open to him and refuſe not to be led on by degrees. The more they attended to the teaching of the Father by his Spirit, and the nearer they came to believe indeed, the more frequent viſits they had from him, and the more aſſiſtance. But after they have followed on ſo far, and become ſo teachable as to believe indeed and ſincerely, to give up themſelves to his conduct, then he communicates himſelf more freely and more conſtantly to them than ever before, in divine influence and aſſiſtance to root and eſtabliſh them in the Chriſtian Faith and Life, and to carry them on further and further towards perfection.

This, ſecondly, is ſet out to us in another vein of Scriptures, *viz.* ſuch as ſpeak of *Gods dwelling in true Belie-*

vers, and sincere Christians, and of their being *the temple of the Holy Ghost*, of which nature are many texts, *Rom.* 8.11. 1 *Cor.*3.16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 *Cor.*6.19. 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Eph.* 2. 22. 1 *John* 3. 24. and 4.13,16. By all which is signified the *more constant residence of the Holy Spirit* in and with men after they believe and become true Christians, to assist them in their great affairs for their souls and another World, as one that is never long absent from them, but ready at hand at all times to help them in doing their duty, and to overcome temptations, unless by grieving him, they cause him to withdraw himself. *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*, *John* 14. 23.

This giving of the Holy Spirit to sincere Christians to be *always with them* as his *dwelling in them* implies, is not onely to help and assist them to persevere

vere in doing onely so much as will entitle them to pardon and life *barely*, as their performing the condition of the promise, though but in the lowest sense of performance will do: But Gods design in giving his Spirit to them after they have perform'd the condition in the lowest sense, is to fit and prepare them for *greater degrees* of blessedness and glory, for a higher and more glorious exaltation therein, than a bare performance of the condition of the promise in simple consideration, and in the lowest degree of performance will well bear.

Our Saviour came, as he says, *that we might have life, and that we might have it in abundance*, *John* 10. 10. not barely to save us, but to exalt us to such a height of glory, that the glory and blessedness of his Body, the Church, might hold some good proportion with his own glory and blessedness, as Head of it. And to encourage true Christians to endeavour to excel in holiness and goodness, in order to this, there are other conditional promises made,

made, besides that of pardon and life upon condition of faith and repentance simply considered. To such as *give all diligence* in *adding* to their Faith Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Brotherly kindness and Charity, so that these things be in them and *abound*, the promise is of an *abundant entrance* into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 *Pet.* 1. And he that *soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully*, 2 *Cor.* 9.6. *And he that humbleth himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven*, *Mat.* 18.4.

Besides, the *Vessels of Mercy* will hold more or less glory, according to their different capacities in grace and service, as they are made larger or lesser. By how much the more near Christians come to Christ in goodness, by so much they are qualified to be the more near to him in happiness and glory. But still, as I say, this greater and more constant presence of the Spirit is given to true Christians after they believe,

lieve, to carry on this great and glorious design of grace towards them, to take them out of the spirit of this World, and to lift them up in holiness and goodness, thereby to make them capable of the greater glory and happiness.

To make this plain and familiar to our thoughts, let it be considered, that upon mens unfeigned believing, follows immediately their *adoption*. *As many as received him, to them he gave power, right, or priviledge to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*, *John* 1. 12. This is a very great advancement indeed, and holds some proportion to that deep humiliation our Saviour underwent to prepare our way to it. Now those whom God adopts to be *sons*, those he adopts to be *heirs* also to his great *inheritance* and glorious estate: so saith the Apostle, *if children then heirs, heirs of God, yea joint-heirs with Christ*, *Rom.*8.17.

This being their happy case; the blessed God and Father, who hath adopted

adopted the Believers for his children and heirs, gives them his Holy Spirit to be always with them, puts his Spirit within them to tutor and diſcipline them, and to give them thereby ſuch breeding as may fit and prepare them for ſo high a relation, and for ſo glorious an inheritance as that is which he intends to ſettle upon them. *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, ſaith the Apoſtle, Gal.4.6.* Saint *Paul* having ſpoken of the happy ſtate which he, with other the Believers, expect and long for after the diſſolution of this earthly tabernacle in which the ſoul now dwells, 2 *Cor.* 5. ſaith in *verſe* 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit.* His giving them his Spirit to fit them for that inheritance, is an *earneſt* or pledge that he does really intend to beſtow it upon them. When he ſaith, He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God, we hereby ſee that it is the work of God by his Spirit to frame and

frame and fashion the Believers for that magnificent estate in the next World which is prepared for them, and to which they are adopted. This work of God upon them, is *to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*, Gal. 1. 12. These Believers are those *Vessels of Mercy whom he thus afore prepares unto glory*, Rom. 9. 23. It is the benevolent work and business of our Lord and Saviour by his Spirit, so *to sanctifie and cleanse* the whole Society of Believers, *that he may present them to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, and to beautifie and adorn them as a Bride for such a Husband as Jesus Christ is, and will appear to be in the day of the manifestation of all his glory, that he may not be ashamed to own them for such.

And thus we see another of the ends for which Christians receive a greater and more constant presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit after they believe than they did before, is to fit and

and prepare them for greater glory and happiness than the lowest degree of performing the condition of the promise as at the first will make them capable of. We will now a little consider in what, or wherein the Holy Spirit doth assist the Believers, when they grow up thereby unto more perfection in the Christian life.

One of the first things I conceive he does is, to *stir* them up *to*, and to *assist* them *in* making prayers, and supplications unto Almighty God, for the working in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight. For although God be ready to bless them with all spiritual blessings in Christ, yet not without being sought unto to do it for them. And accordingly they are promised but upon that condition; *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find*, *Matth.* 7. 7. Otherwise it will fare with them as it did with those S. *James* speaks to, *James* 4. 2. *Ye have not because ye ask not.*

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Now to the end therefore that Believers may receive ſuch an increaſe and growth in all divine Vertues, as by means whereof they may live as becomes the Goſpel, and be made meet for the celeſtial glory, the Holy Spirit doth aſſiſt them to make *requeſts according to the will of God, and helpeth their infirmities*, when otherwiſe *they know not how to pray as they ought*, Rom. 8. 26, 27. *Almighty God poureth on them the Spirit of grace and ſupplication*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Zech.*12.10. He helps them not onely to pray for ſuch things as they ought, but alſo in ſuch a manner as they ſhould, to wit, with a great ſenſe of their own wants and of their own unworthineſs to obtain, and of the worth and excellency, and deſireableneſs of thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings they pray for. He helps them to pray with ſeriouſneſs and devotion of ſoul, and with an humble fervency accompanied with ſighs and groans, which cannot well be uttered by them many times. He helps them alſo to pray in faith concerning the goodneſs of the nature

nature of God, and his readiness to give and to forgive; and concerning the prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ our blessed Advocate. God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts *crying*, *Abba Father*, enabling them in their Addresses to God, to depend upon him as their Father, and humbly to expect to be used and dealt with by him in all respects as a Father, while they resolve and endeavour to carry it toward him as his children.

And when the Holy Spirit enables them to pray thus, they may be said *to pray in the Holy Ghost*, as Jude 20. *to make prayers and supplications in the Spirit*, as *Ephes.*6.18.

And when the Holy Spirit hath thus holpen the Believers to seek those things of God which pertain to life and godliness, grace, strength, and ability to overcome corruptions and temptations, and to live a sober, righteous, and a godly life; then the Holy Spirit in way

way of return to such prayers, doth *assist* them in their endeavours in the *use of means*, to attain those things they have begged of God. This we are well assured of by our Saviour himself, when we compare his saying as related by S. *Matthew*, with the same as related by S. *Luke*. In *Mat.* 7. 11. he saith, *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Or how much more shall your heavenly Father give *his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* saith S. *Luke* 11. 13. From both which compared, we learn, that God is most ready and willing to give those that seriously ask them out of a sense of their want of them, all graces or gracious qualifications and dispositions of soul, necessary to their pleasing of God, by giving them his Holy Spirit to work them in them: Or that by giving them his Holy Spirit, he gives them all those good things; because when the Spirit is given unto men, it is to work those

good things in them, by way of assistance.

This might be shewed in particular instances; I shall mention some. When we *crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts*, when we *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, when we *mortifie the deeds of the body*, it is still by the help and assistance of Gods Spirit that it is done, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Gods Spirit in his Servants *lusteth against the flesh*, as the flesh doth against the Spirit: it draws a contrary way, and therein prevails against the flesh. The flesh calls upon men to be gratified in this and that, in things either unlawful in themselves, or in that degree which is unlawful. But the Spirit calls upon us, by exciting thoughts in us, to mind and regard our souls, and by no means to wrong them by disturbing their peace, or hazarding their safety, to gratifie the flesh with momentary pleasures, which will leave guilt and trouble upon the mind, when they are vanished

niſhed and gone themſelves. And the Spirit by frequent prevailing herein, comes at laſt to kill this itch in the fleſh.

Again, when the Believers minds and wills become more and more *reconciled to their duty*, and to be in love with it, in all the inſtances of it both towards God and towards men, it is ſtill through the help of the Holy Spirit that they are ſo, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. *Ye have purified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.* That they obey the truth in what it requires, it is through the Spirit, ſtrengthening and quickening them thereto, by making the motives thereto, preſent to their thoughts. In 2 *Chron.* 30. 12. it is ſaid, *that in Juda the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the King and of the Princes by the word of the Lord.* The hand of God upon the heart, as well as the word of the Lord by the miniſtry of men, is that by which mens wills are bowed and inclined to what God commands. *He that keepeth his command-*

ments, dwelleth in him, and he in him, saith the Apostle, 1 *John* 3. 24. Our keeping the commandments is an evidence of Gods dwelling in us, because it is the effect of his presence with us to assist us therein; he argues from the effect to the cause.

Again, it is the effect of the Holy Spirits presence with Believers, and of his operation in them, when their minds and spirits become purified and refined from inordinateness of affection and unrulines of passion, until by degrees they are brought in some good measure unto *a likeness and conformity to the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ*, whose Scholars they are. *They that are joined to the Lord are one spirit.* They mind, love, hate, and design the same things which our Saviour doth. They participate of that love, gentleness, benignity and goodness which was so eminent in him (*the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, Ephes.* 5. 9.) by which means they come to *be in the world as he was in the world,*

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as S. *Johns* phraſe is. *Hereby*, ſaith S. *John*, *we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, *Joh.* 3.24. It is ſo like him, that it muſt needs come from him, and if it be in us, it is becauſe he dwells in us. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*, 1 *John* 4.12. When we love one another as Chriſt hath loved us, when we are merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful, his love and goodneſs is ſo reſembled by us, as that it is perfectly diſcernible in us.

Moreover the Holy Spirit is given to the Believers, to be with them, to ſtrengthen them with reſolution and courage to hold on their courſe of holy living, and cleaving faithfully to Chriſt, notwithſtanding all oppoſition and diſcouragement they may meet with from the World in doing ſo. To this end they are *ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, Epheſ. 3. 16. *For God hath not given them the ſpirit of fear, but of*

power and love, and of a sound mind, 2 *Tim.*1.7.

And not onely so, but the Holy Spirit is given to the Believers to be always with them, to maintain and uphold in them *a comfortable and chearful frame of spirit*, and so to keep them *from fainting*, when they are *called to suffer* for the sake of our Saviour, or his truth or doctrine. And it is doubtless from this effect among others, of the Spirits abiding with the Believers, that he is stiled *the Comforter*. And for the same reason principally, the joy which they have amidst their sufferings for righteousnes sake, is called *the joy of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thess.1.6. *having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost*. And well may it be called the joy of the Holy Ghost, because solid joy under such circumstances, can proceed from no other cause but the Holy Spirits operation. It is not the manner of the World as it is with Believers, to rejoice in affliction, in wrongs and injuries, and hard usage

usage from men, but the contrary; because they have no principle in them, out of which such a thing should proceed. And therefore our Savior saith to his Disciples, *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you, Joh.* 14.27. The Holy Spirit can raise joy, yea great joy in the souls of the followers of Christ when they suffer never so hard measure from the hands of men, so long as they know it is for their faithfulness to their blessed Lord and Master, who hath suffered and done so much for them as he hath done. The Spirit of God can so order their thoughts within them, that they shall not look upon themselves as disgraced thereby, but as highly honoured by their Master, by giving them both opportunity and courage to do him that honour when his adversaries would cast reproach and shame upon him and his Cause, and all that appear for it. And thus the Apostles *when they had been beaten, departed from the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name*

of Jesus their Lord, *Acts* 5. 41. The Holy Ghost can suggest to them also, that a great deal of good by such sufferings may be done to others in causing them to think the more and the better of the Christian Religion, when they see with what chearfulness the Professors of it can suffer for its sake. When the *Thessalonians* received the Word in much affliction, and yet with joy of the Holy Ghost, they became thereby *ensamples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia*, and from them and their deportment in suffering for the Gospel, *the word of the Lord sounded out, not onely in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place their faith was spread abroad and talked of.* 1 *Thess.* 1. 6,7,8. It was this joyous deportment of the primitive Martyrs in their sufferings that tended so greatly to the increase and enlargement of the Church, as History relates it did.

The Christians then were enabled *to glory in tribulation* of this kind, in as much as they were guided to consi-

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der that this *patient enduring* without repining, would give them *experience* of their ſincerity and fidelity in cleaving to Chriſt; and then this *experience* would give them *hope*, ſuch as ſhould not make them *aſhamed* through any diſappointment, but great confidence towards God of being accepted, *Rom.*5.3,4.

And not onely ſo, but alſo touching the greatneſs of the reward which is laid up in heaven for ſuch; *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Upon account whereof our Saviour bids them to *rejoice and to be exceeding glad, yea to leap for joy in that day*, when they ſhould be perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, and have their name caſt out as evil, and the like. When the Chriſtians were enabled *to ſuffer the ſpoiling of their goods*, yea and of their lives too, not onely with patience, but alſo with *joyfulneſs:* when they were *as ſorrowing, and yet always rejoycing*; whence was this? And how can it be imagined that they ſhould ever

be

be able to do, and to be so, but that they *were strengthened with all might according to Gods glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness,* as S. *Paul* speaks, *Col.* 1. 11. *The Spirit of God and of glory, then rested upon them* as the other Apostle saith, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. How came S. *Stephen* to stand with such an undaunted courage before the Council, as if his face had been the face of an Angel? Why it was because *he was full of the Holy Ghost*, he had a mighty presence of the Spirit with him to enable him thereunto.

S. *Paul* learned by experience, that as his sufferings did abound for Christ, so *his consolations by Christ did abound also*, (2 Cor. 1. 5.) that *when he was weak, then he was strong*; that he had a mightier presence, a more powerful and comfortable influence of the Holy Spirit in times of great trials and sufferings for Christ, than he had at other times. And this experience of his made him so far from being afraid of suffering,

ſuffering, that for the ſake of that wonderful comfort which was wont to come along with ſuffering, he was rather glad when ſuffering came, than any way dejected and caſt down for it, 2 *Cor.*12.9,10. *Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes, for Chriſts ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* Their hope that God would make good to them his exceeding great and precious promiſes, was at ſuch time raiſed very high, made lively, vigorous and ſtrong, by the Spirit of God. *Rejoycing in hope*, ſaith S. *Paul* in one place, *abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt*; in another, *Rom.*12.12. and 15.13. When the Holy Ghoſt did put forth himſelf, did exert his power in raiſing the Chriſtians hope, it is no marvel then if they did abound therein; that is, that their expectations roſe very high, were vigorous and ſtrong, and very affecting, filling

ling them with such joy as over-topp'd, and in a great measure swallowed up the sense of their sufferings.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew how the Spirit of God doth assist the Believers to do more than meerly to persevere and hold out in performing the condition of the promise under the sorest trials and greatest temptations to the contrary; for it enables them to glory and rejoice under them, and so to be more than conquerors, to fight the good fight of Faith, to finish their course, to keep the Faith, and all in order to their laying hold of eternal life.

To conclude then this matter: all these and other like assistances, influences and consolations of the good Spirit of God, by which the Believers are prepared for glory, are, I conceive, the things meant by S. *Paul* by that *Communion*, or rather *Communication of the Holy Ghost*, which he in his Apostolical benediction seriously desired and in-

invoked in the behalf of the Christians when he dismissed them thus; *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion* or communication *of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* 2 Cor. 13. 14. For as he wished them the comfort and benefit that flows from the grace or charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressed in his Mediatorial performance, and from the love of God, from which that did proceed: So he did likewise the communication of those assistances and graces of the Holy Spirit, by which they might be enabled to do their part in performing what was required of themselves in order thereunto.

CHAR.

Chap. VIII.

Cautions against mens depriving themselves of Divine Assistance, by running into two contrary extreams.

HAving thus far shewed, as well as I could, what assistance men receive from God in performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life: it will be necessary now to add something by way of Caution.

1. To take heed not to *deprive our selves* of those benefits for the attaining of which these assistances are granted, nor of those *assistances themselves*, by *neglecting to do* what God expects we should do towards the working out our own salvation (as we shall if we neglect to fall in with these assistances) by endeavouring to do those things for the accomplishing of which, these assistances are afforded us.

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The very *notion of assistance* implies in it that those who are assisted by God, are *not meerly passive* in performing the condition of the promise, for the performance whereof these assistances are vouchsafed us, but some way *active in that performance.*

God doubtless does expect when he hath awakened in men a sense of their danger by reason of sin; and hath set before them what he hath done, and Christ hath done to rescue and deliver them from it; and what must be done by themselves to make them capable of the blessed effects of our Saviours performance in obtaining pardon and life; and what assistance they shall have to that end, if they will but truly endeavour to do what they can do towards it: I say when God hath set all this before them, he expects that they should put forth themselves in endeavours tending towards the performance of the condition of the promise. He expects they should think on, and consider those things which he sets before

fore them, and at least out of regard to their own safety to be moved thereby to make use of the means tending to enable them to perform the condition of obtaining pardon and life, and to be doing what they well can do towards that performance.

Doubtless such expressions in Scripture, as I shall now set before you, cannot signifie less than this. *Ezek.* 14.6. *Thus saith the Lord God, repent and turn your selves from your Idols.* Ezek.18.30. *Repent and turn your selves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruine.* Vers. 31. *Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* Ver. 32. *I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn your selves and live.* Can all these expressions, can mens repenting and turning themselves, and their making them a new heart, possibly signifie less than *real endeavours* to do so?

so? Again, *Jer.* 4. 4. *Circumcise your selves unto the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts.* Acts 2.40. *Save your selves from this untoward generation.* And all the precepts, exhortations and persuasions in Scripture to repent, to believe, to obey, are of the same signification. Such for instance, as *Acts* 17. 30. *But now God commandeth all men every where to repent.* Chap. 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized.* Chap. 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore and be converted;* and the like. These Scriptures imply, and suppose that men can do something towards repenting, towards turning themselves and making them a new heart, or else we must suppose that God commandeth, presseth, and persuadeth men to do that, towards which he knows they can do nothing. The latter of which to suppose, would be to suppose the Scriptures to make the same bad representation of God with the slothful servant in the Parable, *viz.* that he is *a hard Master, expecting to reap where he hath not sown, and to gather where he hath not scattered.* And

who would not abhor to fasten that upon God, which is not consistent with the goodness of a man? We know what it signified in *Pharaoh* to require the full tale of Brick, when he did not give the people Straw wherewith to make them. And God forbid we should represent the good God to our selves in the likeness of *Pharaoh*.

Besides, for any to say that men are wholly *passive* in performing the condition of the promise, is to lay a temptation upon themselves and others, not to endeavour to perform it, nor to do any thing towards it. For who will attempt to do, or endeavour to do that which they believe impossible to be done by them? And for men not to endeavor to do what they can towards the performance of that condition, is the *directest course* they can take to *deprive* themselves of that *assistance* from God by which they might have performed it. *For from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath*, saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 13. 12. Him that hath not;

not; that is, him that hath not used what he had; as we may see by him that had the one talent, and had it taken away, because he did not use it. And that this is the meaning of those words, From him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath, appears by our Saviours next words, *Verse* 13. by which he explains that saying of his: *Therefore speak I to them in Parables, because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not:* Meaning that they had as it were eyes, but did not see with them, and ears, but did not hear with them: that is, they had means by which they might have seen and heard, and understood so much as would have made them capable of further discoveries and assistances, but did not make use of them, and therfore those farther discoveries and assistances, were with-held from them, which yet were granted to the Disciples.

What our Saviour here said in this matter, was in answer to a question of the Disciples, who asked him, saying, *Why speakest thou to them in Parables?*

Verse 10. And his answer was, *Because it was not given unto them* (the disobedient Jews) *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, as it was to the Disciples. And the reason why it was not given, was as he shews, because they seeing saw not, and hearing heard not. They had eyes and ears to see and hear with „ but did not use them for the ends for which they received them. They had not heard and learned of the Father by attending to, or regarding his methods of preparing men for the Faith of the Gospel. They had not attended unto those things which natural Religion it self would have taught them, and which they might have seen by the natural light of their minds, as well as they saw external objects with the eyes of their bodies, if they had not shut them: Nor had they learned by his teaching them by *Moses* and the Prophets. And because they did not use what they had before, therefore it was that more assistance was not given them to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

ven. That this was the reaſon of it, is yet further confirmed by what our Saviour ſaid on the other hand, *John* 7.17. *If any man will do his will* (*i.e.* the Fathers will) *he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* For by this we ſee, that if theſe Jews to whom it was not given to know the myſteries of the Kingdom, had been inclined and diſpoſed in their own minds by former motives, to have done the will of God which they already knew, as others of them were, it would have been given unto them as well as it was to the Diſciples, to have known thoſe myſteries. The reaſon therefore why this further knowledge was not given them, was becauſe they had no mind to do what they had been taught by God; by a teaching antecedent to his teaching them by Chriſt.

By all which we may ſee that men cannot take a more direct courſe, as I ſay, to deprive themſelves of that aſſiſtance from God, by which they might

perform the condition of the promise, than by neglecting to do what they may and can do through Gods preventing grace towards that performance. And if so, then that opinion must needs be of a very dangerous nature that does incline men to such a neglect: And yet such is the opinion that men are wholly *passive* in performing the condition of the promise. For what can be a greater check (as I have said) to mens endeavours to effect any thing, than an opinion that they can do nothing towards it. Men are very prone to govern themselves in acting or forbearing to act, by their principles and the notions they have of things: if these be corrupt, that which is the consequence of them cannot be sound. Mens errour in practice, is very much owing to the errour of their minds, and wrong notions of things; *They do alway err in their heart, for they have not known my ways*, saith the Holy Ghost, *Heb.* 3. 10. there the errour in life and practice begins. If men have wrong notions in their minds of Gods

ways

ways and methods of proceeding with men in reference to their ſalvation, it can hardly be avoided but they will more or leſs err in point of ſuch practice alſo, as is any way influenced by thoſe notions. *If the light which is in you be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs! Mat.6.23.*

Almighty God gives to every man from whom he requires repentance and faith, ability to do ſomething towards it, though not compleatly to repent and believe without further aſſiſtance than that which he gives at the firſt. When men therefore do but improve that little which they have, in doing that little which they can do towards their repenting and believing, God will vouchſafe them further aſſiſtance and ability to do yet more towards it; and if they do but improve that additional ability to the doing yet more towards the ſame end, God will doubtleſs vouchſafe to ſuch, further and further aſſiſtance, until they acquire thereby that true faith and repentance, on which pardon and life

are promised. For so saith our Saviour, *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance*, Mat. 13.12. *And to you that have, more shall be given.* And again, *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*, Mark 4. 24. All which sayings seem to signifie, that according to Gods ordinary method of proceeding with men, they shall have more or less assistance from him, as they do with more or less care and diligence use what they have received already.

And as there is need for men to be cautioned against neglecting to use what power they have towards performing the condition of the promise in repenting and believing before they do repent and believe; so there is need likewise of cautioning others against neglecting to improve their repentance, faith, and obedience, from a lower to a higher degree, from the state of Babes to a manly stature in Christianity. For there is a danger of abusing this comfortable doctrine

of

of Divine Assistance, to a spiritual sloth, idleness, and negligence, and that under pretence of honouring God, and glorifying Free-grace; as by leaving all to be done by him, that he may have the honour of all. As if men were not in confidence of Gods assistance, and so in the strength of the Lord to run the race set before them, but to be taken up into arms and carried all the way to Heaven without their running or going.

Whereas when men truly enter into the *Christian* state, and seriously set their faces for heaven, they then enter into a spiritual warfare against the Flesh, World, and Devil; and they, as the Israelites, must fight for the promised Land before they enter it, though they receive it by promise as they did: they must *first fight the good fight of faith*, and then *lay hold of eternal life*. It is *he that overcometh, that shall inherit all things*, *Rev.* 21.7. For men not to stir up themselves, not to gird up the loins of their minds to fight their way through to Heaven, but to resolve to

be

be *onely passive*, under pretence that the Captain of our salvation might have all the honour of the Victory, would be much what as ridiculous as it would be for Souldiers in an Army to say they would leave it wholly to their Captain General to fight for them while they sit still, that he might have all the honour of the Victory. The ability of God and our Saviour to save, hath no other limits save what his will directed by his infinite wisdom hath put upon it: but the divine will hath so limited this power, that the *promise of Crowning* is not made but to such as through striving *overcome*.

All the promises and assurances we have of Divine Assistance, are to encourage our diligence and industry in working out and carrying quite through the business of our salvation, and to overcome all that doth oppose us, or which any way tends to hinder us in it. Of this nature is that of S. *Paul*, *Phil.*2. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for*

for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. Gods working in us, his readiness to assist us, is given as the motive and argument to persuade us to work out our own salvation. If we do but put forth our selves to do what we can in doing our duty, though it be with fear and trembling, when we consider our own weakness and the strength of the enemies we are to encounter and overcome in doing so, we are assured of this for our encouragement, that if we do so, we shall find an inward and secret assistance from God to fortifie our resolutions, and to bring the same to good effect, so that all our spiritual enemies shall not be able to hinder us, but that we shall still hold on our way and grow stronger and stronger, as *Job* speaks of the righteous, and he that hath clean hands. God will not fail to add more strength to our willing and doing, in carrying on the work of grace, and so of salvation, to a greater height and more perfection, if we are but faithful in endeavouring it

our

our selves. *Be of good courage and God shall strengthen thine heart*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 27. 14. The motive wherewith to persuade men to be of good courage and firm resolution in the way of their duty, is we see, because then God will strengthen their hearts; that is, will yield them more and further assistance, and by that means make their duty more and more easie to them, as it must needs be, to the same degree their strength is increased, by which it is to be done.

The Lord is so ready, nay so certain to assist his servants in their faithful endeavours to do their duty, that they may be as sure of it, and as much depend upon it as if they had it in their own power. And therefore St. *Paul* exhorted the Christians *to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, *Ephes.* 6. 10. As if they might reckon themselves armed with his strength, while they depend upon him for it in doing their duty. Which made S. *Paul* speak so confidently, *I can do all things through*

through Christ that strengthens me, Phil. 4.13. And again, *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* He accounted that if they had any mind to mortifie the deeds of the body, they might be sure of help from the Spirit wherewith to do it, whenever in good earnest they went about it.

But when men think themselves so sure of being kept by the power of God as that they grow careless and remiss as to their own endeavours of doing their duty, and standing upon their guard against temptations, they many times slip into such ways and doings by which the Spirit of God is *grieved* and withdraws from them, and with-holds his quickning influences, and then they grow dry and flat, and unsavoury too, and fall even then when they thought they stood sure.

2. And the like may be said touching the danger on the other hand also. *For when men have such an opinion of*

their

their own power and ability to perform the condition of the promise, as that they are not mindful of the Holy Spirits assistance, nor sensible of their need of it, but are negligent in addressing to God for it, and in their dependance upon him for the supplies of it, it cannot be expected that the Holy Spirit should take any such pleasure in such men, as to take up his residence and make his abode with them. And if not, the communication of his assistance to such men must needs be more rare and more sparing, and his visits less frequent. And when they are so, it will be visible in the dulness, dead-heartedness, and barrenness of such Christians, though then they may retain a form of godliness.

For the Holy Spirit will not vouchsafe to such his special presence and assistance, who do not know their need of it, nor how to prize it. And accordingly our Saviour speaking of the *Spirit of truth*, saith, *whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him*, John 14. 17. So that

that it seems mens receiving the Spirit depends very much upon their knowing him in the usefulness and benefit of his communications, and valuing him accordingly.

So that we see there is danger of running into extremes on both hands; either in mens pretending so much dependance upon divine Assistance, as to neglect to do what they can do towards performing the condition of the promise: or else in having such an opinion of their own power and ability to perform it, as to over-look and neglect the Divine Assistance, as if they had little or no need of it.

Such as this latter sort are far from the mind of S. *Paul*, who was still careful to attribute his after, as well as his first Christian performances to Divine Assistance. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. *I laboured more than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. And again, *I will not dare to*

speak

speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, Rom. 15. 18. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. And our Saviour taught his Disciples to be of the same mind, when he said, *Without me ye can do nothing*; *John* 15. 5.

And where Christians are full of the sense of their need of Divine Assistance, and accordingly highly prize it, seek it, and depend on God for it; and yet are withall as careful and diligent in their own endeavours, as if all the work lay wholly on their hands. These are they the Holy Spirit delights in, and delights to spiritualize, to influence, quicken, and strengthen, and to lift them up near unto Heaven, in preparing them for it. For thus saith our Saviour to his Disciples, speaking to them of the Spirit of truth whom the World cannot receive, because it doth not know him; *but ye know him*, (saith he) *therefore he abideth with*

with you and shall be among you: for so Dr. *Hammond* reads the place, *John* 14.17. As if he had said, because ye know how to value his presence and assistance, therefore you shall have it.

CHAP. IX.

Something of the grounds of incouragement which such have to expect assistance fully to perform the condition of the promise, as have not refused to make use of Gods preparatory assistance towards it.

THat God doth prevent all endeavours on our part of returning to him, by his applications to us to make us sensible of the badness and danger of our sinful state, to dispose us thereby to hearken to his merciful terms of being delivered from it, before we our selves make any one step towards it; I have shewed before. Now those who have made so much use of Gods preparatory assistance as

thereupon to become inquisitive what they should do to be saved, and desirous to be taught. These I reckon have encouragement to expect and hope to be further and further assisted, until they are enabled fully to perform the condition of the promise.

1. For first our Saviour hath positively asserted, and that more than once, *that to him that hath, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance*, *Mat.* 13.12. and 25.29. Which can be understood, I conceive, of nothing more properly than of Divine Assistance: and so he, whosoever he be, that hath had assistance from God towards performing the condition of the Gospel-Covenant, and hath made use of it by using endeavours towards such a performance, to him more shall be given, to wit, more assistance, until he have abundance of it, and of grace proportionably.

2. Those who have made use of Gods preparatory assistance, are *given* by

by the Father to his Son Christ Jesus, to be assisted by him fully to perform the condition of the promise in believing and obeying the Gospel. And those that are given by the Father to the Son to be thus assisted, have great reason to be confidently perswaded they shall. For our Saviour hath said of such, *that he will in no wise cast them out*, but receive them as Disciples, and treat them as becomes such a Master.

That those who are given by the Father to the Son, are such as have made use of Gods preparatory assistance, appears by comparing our Saviours words in *John* 6.37. with those in the 44 and 45 verses. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me*, saith he *verse* 37. And in *verse* 44. he saith, *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him:* and *verse* 45. *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Now if those, and onely those come to Christ, whom the Father giveth him, then those must needs

be the persons which are given to Christ, which are prepared by the Father; because all these, and none but these come to Christ, according to our Saviours words expressly.

Now that the Father gives these to the Son for that end that they may be assisted by him to perform the condition of the promise, will (I conceive) appear by what will follow by and by. The Fathers giving these to the Son, doth not suppose them to have believed in the Son, when he gives them to him, but the contrary. For the Fathers giving them to the Son, is antecedent to their coming to him: for Christ saith all that the Father giveth me, *shall* come unto me, not *are* come unto me. And to what end do they come to him, but to learn of him, and be taught by him how to be saved? *i.e.* to perform the condition on which salvation is promised.

For that I take to be the meaning of the Fathers giving these to the Son, *viz.* his

his committing them to him to be made Disciples by him, to be taught and enabled to do that on which salvation is promised.

Not that the Fathers thus giving these to the Son to be assisted by him, is so to be understood, as if the Father did wholly remit them to the Son, and did not still continue to assist them by the same Spirit by which he prepared them for him at the first. For that *faith* by which they perform the condition of the promise, is *the gift of God*, and those who are regenerated, *are born of God*; and *it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do*, even when they perform the condition of the promise in the best manner that ever it is performed. And accordingly we are to direct our prayers to the Father for the Holy Spirit, and for all the assistances and fruits of it. But those prepared by the Father, are said to be given to the Son, in order to their being brought by him to believe the Gospel; because the dispensing of all

Evangelical assistances, and of all Gospel-grace, is committed to the Son; but yet so as that the Father gives this by the Son, as the Son also does by the Holy Ghost.

For the better understanding of this matter we must know, that after our Saviours humiliation, came his exaltation by the Father, who gave unto him as Mediatour God-man, a Kingdom glory and greatness, all power in Heaven and Earth, *he gave all things into his hands, Joh.*3.35. *committed all judgment to the Son, Joh.*5.22. The Father committed to the Son the whole Evangelical Oeconomy, the power of managing all affairs belonging to the being and well-being of the Church which he had purchased with his own bloud, over which he made him head; yea, head also over all things to the Church; for he made him Prince of the Kings of the Earth, the onely Potentate, as the Scripture speaks.

This

This authority and power is said to be given to Christ, *because he is the Son of man; John* 5. 27. that is, I conceive, because he is the Messiah, to whom such a Kingdom and Regal power was promised and foretold in the Prophets, under that denomination of the *Son of Man.* Thus *Daniel* saw in a Vision *one like the Son of man, to whom the ancient of days gave dominion, glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages might serve him, Dan.* 7.13,14. And *Son of Man* is the appellation which our Saviour as the Messiah, doth frequently give unto himself, as is recorded in the Evangelical History, and which S. *John* in his Book of *Revelations*, doth also more than once give him. And *Isaias* foretold concerning *a child that should be born, that the Government should be upon his shoulders, upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom to order and establish it for ever, chap.*9.6,7. To which agrees that of the Angel to the Mother of our Lord, *Luke* 1. 33,34. *The Lord God shall give unto him the throne*

of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end. All agreeing that this Kingdom, Government and Power, should be administred by the Son of God in humane nature, and because he is the Son of Man.

Now in this gift of the Father, the giving such to his Son as he had prepared to become his Disciples, and to be made so by him, is included; they are part of the *all* things which the Father hath put into his hand. In giving him a Kingdom, he gives him a people to be his Subjects, whose good behaviour, and whose happiness he is to provide for, and to promote by his spiritual Government. When the Prophet had spoken of Gods setting his Son upon his holy hill of *Zion*, *Psal.* 2.6. in *verse* 8. he brings in God speaking thus to him; *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* These are prepared by the Father to become Subjects

jects to the Son then when he gives them to him; but are actually made subject to his Spiritual Government by the Son himself, by his *going forth conquering and to conquer* by his Gospel; it *is by his arrows the people fall under him.*

Now the Fathers thus committing to his Son the power of managing all matters that concern the forming and perfecting one Christian Church throughout the World, and so of dispensing all aids and assistances to that end, doth not imply or suppose the Fathers relinquishing this power, but his doing all by his Son, as designing to interess the Man Christ Jesus in all these great affairs. And thus when the Father sends the Holy Spirit, by whose influences we receive our assistances, he then sends him in the name of the Son, as being concerned with him in such sending; *John* 14.26. *The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name*, saith our Saviour. And on the other hand,

hand, the Son when he sends the Holy Spirit, he sends him as from the Father who is always concerned also in such sending, *John* 15. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testifie of me.*

But as I say, the Father dispenseth the influences and assistances of the Spirit *by the Son*, as God-man, now in the time of this Kingdom of his which the Father hath given him. S. *Paul* speaking of Gods saving us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which saith he, he shed on us abundantly, *through* Jesus Christ our Saviour, *Tit.* 3. 6. I thank my God always on your behalf, for *the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 4, 5. And because these aids are thus dispensed by the Son, though from the Father, and by the Holy Ghost, they are called *the supplies of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, *Phil.*

Phil. 1. 19. *And it is God that ſupplies all our need, according to his riches in glory*, but it is *by Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.* 4. 19. And the Holy Spirit is ſtiled the *Spirit of the Son*, even then when he is ſent into our hearts by the Father, for the reaſon aforeſaid, *Gal.* 4. 6. And ſo for the gifts and graces of the Spirit, they are all diſpenſed by Jeſus Chriſt. *To every one of us* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt. Epheſ.* 4. 7.

All this I have noted, that we might the better underſtand for what reaſon and in what reſpect thoſe prepared to receive the Faith of the Goſpel, are ſaid to be given by the Father to the Son to work that faith in them: and it is becauſe in giving him the Mediatory Kingdom, he gives him the power of diſpenſing all thoſe aids and aſſiſtances, by which men are made true and ſincere Chriſtians.

But to proceed yet a little further in this matter, the uſe of which, as to the prin-

principal scope of this Chapter, will be better discerned afterward: the reason why the Father confers this Regal dignity and authority upon the Son, and the power of sending the Spirit, and of dispensing aids and gifts, is not onely that *all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, which yet is one reason of it, *John* 5. 23. Nor yet onely as a reward of his deep humiliation, suffering, and obedience unto death, which is another, *Phil.*2.9,10. but also that Gods great design of reforming the World by sending his Son into it, and of converting sinners to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, might by that means be facilitated, as tending to render Christ the more glorious, and the more attractive an object of Faith. It is by his being thus exalted, that men are more especially brought to believe in him. It is *by him that we do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory that our faith and hope might be in God*, 1 *Pet.*1.21. So that we see this glorious advancement of

of Christ, hath the nature of an *aid* in it to help us to believe.

The meanness of our Saviours appearance in the World while he was in it, and his crucifixion at the last, was that which prejudiced men against both him and his doctrine; it was their stumbling block, and that at which they were offended, and all through a mistake of the nature of Christs Kingdom and Government; so that he had but very few Disciples at last, notwithstanding all his mighty miracles and gracious words. But when he was raised from the dead, and exalted in his kingdom and glory, and had given a powerful demonstration of it by sending the Holy Ghost, as he had promised he would, to enable those that preached in his name, and those that believed in his name, to do so many wonderful things in his name as they did: this proof of his exaltation, in a short time filled a great part of the World with Disciples to him, and made men flock by multitudes into his Church and Kingdom. This

This effect of his glorious exaltation, was foretold by the Prophets. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, more than the womb of the morning*, according to the marginal reading, *Psal.* 110. 3. These words, *more than the womb of the morning*, seem to be hyperbolical, to shew the vast numbers of Disciples and Subjects, the day of Christs power and glorious exaltation, should procure him, even like the drops of the morning-dew for multitude. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaking as it were to the Messiah, of whom he propheſied, said, *Nations that knew thee not shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee*, *Isa.* 55.5. That is the reason we see of the Nations running in unto him; it is because Almighty God hath *glorified* him, *exalted*, *extolled*, *and made him very high*, as the same Prophet speaks, *chap.* 52.13.

When men perceived that the God of Heaven so far approved of what Christ

Christ had taught, done, and suffered in the World, as to reward him for it with such power and glory, this procured from them a belief of his doctrine, and put a great reputation upon it: it raised in men also a great expectation from him as from one that was very well able to prefer and reward his friends and followers, as he had promised he would.

We find that the sending of the Holy Ghost, the pouring out of the Spirit in those greater measures foretold by the Prophets, was deferred unto this time of the glorious exaltation of Christ. So saith the Evangelist S. *John* 7.39. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* And the reason hereof was, that he might have the honour of sending him, and of dispensing the assistances and manifold gifts of the Spirit, and thereby convince men that he was the same which he always declared himself to be, the Son of God sent down from Heaven. *If I go not away the Comforter*

will

will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he shall convince the World of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye see me no more. John 16. 7, 8, 10. Convince the World of righteousness, that is, he should convince them that Christ was no deceiver, as they accused him to be here on Earth, but the true Messiah, Son of God and Saviour of the World, as he had declared himself to be while he was here in the World. And this our Saviour says the Holy Ghost should convince the World of, because of his going to the Father: that is, by the Fathers receiving him up into glory after his resurrection and placing him there in royal Majesty. This our Saviour says the Spirit should convince the World of when he was come from him; and the event plainly declares how.

For within a few days after our Saviours ascension into Heaven, and his enthronation there, he sends down the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles that preached

preached in his name and were his witneſs, and upon others alſo that believed in his name, enabling them by the Holy Ghoſt to ſpeak and do ſuch things, as by hearing and ſeeing of which, great multitudes were preſently convinced that Jeſus was the Chriſt, the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the World, about three thouſand of them being baptized into this Faith the very ſame day in which the Holy Ghoſt was thus ſent by Chriſt.

For S. *Peter* diſcourſed to them of this wonderful event thus, *Acts* 2. 32, 33. *This Jeſus* (of whom he had been ſpeaking) *hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear.* The end and deſign of all which, was to convince men that Jeſus is the Chriſt of God; which was done by convincing them that God had thus exalted him and given this

power of doing these wonders by the Spirit he had sent. For that is the use S. *Peter* drew it to, *Verse* 36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Now this sending of the Holy Ghost was so necessary to qualifie the Apostles for the great work of converting the World by preaching Christ and his doctrine, and for the procuring credit to be given to it, that our Saviour would not have them so much as set upon it, or go about it, *but commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with this power from on high*, *Luke* 24. 49. And the preaching of the Gospel under this qualification, was doubtless the preaching it *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, which S. *Paul* speaks of 1 *Cor.* 2. 4.

Now by this we see how those assistances which men receive in believing, and

and so in performing the condition of the promise, do depend upon the Fathers giving all things into the hands of the Son: and how for that reason the Father gives such as have been preparatively assisted by him, unto the Son to be compleatly assisted to perform the condition of the promise. And indeed the reason why so many turned to God in so little a time after Christs exaltation, than ever was known before, was because those assistances then dispensed by him, were more and greater than ever were vouchsafed the World before.

And lest any should be discouraged, or think their condition worse than indeed it is, for that we have no such external assistances by the sending of the Holy Ghost, as men in those primitive times had, let this one thing be considered; That the Christians now are as really assisted by that sending of the Holy Ghost which was in those times, as those were who lived then; supposing the truth of the Hi-

story of it, of which there is no cause to doubt. For we have the same Gospel as they had, and that under the same evidence by which it was demonstrated to them to be from Heaven, and that the then glorified Jesus was the author of it. And we may as truly be said to have Christ and his Apostles now in respect of external assistance, as the Jews in those times were to have *Moses* and the Prophets. For we have the same doctrine which Christ and his Apostles preached, and many of the same miracles which they wrought to confirm it, transmitted down to us by their writings and unquestionable tradition; and the Jews had *Moses* and the Prophets no otherwise in our Saviours time, when he said they had *Moses* and the Prophets. The miracles of the Apostles then, wrought the same effect, procured the same belief of their doctrine, in many that onely heard of them by credible testimony, as they did in them that saw them done. We see our Saviour upbraided his Disciples for not believing

ving matter of Fact, when teſtified to them by credible eye-witneſſes. *Mark* 16. 14. *And he ſaid to Thomas, bleſſed are they which have not ſeen, and yet have believed.* And when S. *John* had written a Hiſtory of ſome of the ſigns or miracles which our Saviour did, he ſays, *theſe are written that men might believe*, *John* 20. 30, 31. By this he ſuppoſed his written teſtimony of what he had ſeen and heard, to be a competent ground of faith in others. and S. *Paul* ſaith, *Hold faſt the tradition which ye have been tanght, whether by word or our Epiſtle*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2.15.

But although it is not neceſſary that the ſame miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, ſhould be repeated in every Age, to convince men that Chriſt, who was firſt crucified, is now advanced to the throne of his glory, and hath the power of ſending the Holy Ghoſt to confirm the doctrine which was preached in his name by them who proved their miſſion from

him by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds which were done in his name; though, as I say, the repetition of these be not necessary in every Age, this having been done *once for all* in one Age, as S. *Jude* speaks of the Faith *once delivered to the Saints*; yet the inward assistance by the Spirit, to cause the external assistances to operate the more effectually upon the mind, is still necessary, and is still continued in the Church. For in this respect our Saviour by his Spirit as well as by his word, is with his people always, to the end of the World, as he promised he would, and as he promised his Spirit likewise should. *I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.* John 14.16. It was this presence of Christ, I conceive, which S. *Paul* desired might be and continue with *Timothies* Spirit, 2 *Tim.*4.22. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit.*

In this part of my Discourse concerning

cerning Divine Assistance, I have endeavoured to shew, that our Lord and Saviour hath the power of dispensing Evangelical and Spiritual Assistances committed to him by the Father, and that that is the reason why the Father is said to give such to the Son as have heard and learned of the Father. And now this high advancement of the Son, and his having all power in Heaven and Earth given to him, leaves no place for us to doubt of his ability to assist those to the uttermost, who do not make themselves uncapable of it, by refusing to make use of it, and of the Fathers preparatory assistance. And truly all such have no more reason neither to doubt of our Saviours willingness to assist them, than they have of his power, if these few things following be but duly considered.

1. That Kingdom, Glory, and Greatness forementioned, and the power of dispensing aids and assistances is given by the Father to the Son for this very end among others, that he might use

and manage all for the bringing men, such as the Father hath given him, to perform the condition of the promise, in repenting, in believing, and obeying the Gospel, *Acts* 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* The father advanced him to that high honour and dignity, that he might be a publick good to mankind, in assisting them to perform the condition of the promise, as he had been before by his humiliation for the obtaining of the promise upon that condition, that so he might be a compleat Saviour in saving us as well from sin in the power and pollution of it, as from the guilt of it. *He ascended far above all Heavens, that he might fill* or fulfil *all things*, *Ephes.* 4.10. That he might fully dispence and bestow whatever is necessary to the perfecting of the Saints and edification of the body of Christ. The Apostle having said in *chap.* 1. 20, 21. *that God having raised Christ from the dead, set him at his own right hand in*

the

the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not onely in this World, but also in that which is to come; and having put all things under his feet; then in Verse 22, and 23. he says, *he gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* He did not onely give him to be the Head of his Church, but to be Head over all things to the Church, to the use and benefit of the Church; for the fulness of this power of his in the issue and benefit of it, runs in to his Church for whom he received it, and in respect whereof, the Church is his fulness in a passive sense: for it is he *that filleth all in all*, as S. *John* saith, *of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace*, *John* 1.16. such a fulness as holds some proportion with the fulness of such a head: all the fulness wherewith all and every one of his Church are filled, is derived from him, it is all of his filling, and that as he is Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church.

For

For he is not onely a political Head to the Church to govern it by Laws, but such a Head also as resembles a natural head by way of influence, conveying by his Spirit a vital and quickning power unto all the members, to enable them to obey those Laws. The whole body hath *from this head nourishment ministred*, as S. *Paul* shews *Col.* 2. 19. Upon which account S. *Paul* could say, *I am able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. But without him* (as our Saviour told his Disciples) *ye can do nothing.*

Now if all this fulness, all this power we have been speaking of, was given to the Son, was put into his hands for that end that he should use it, and manage it in aiding and assisting those whom the Father hath given him, to perform the condition on which pardon and eternal life are promised, there is no question to be made of his willingness to use it to that end, especially when we further consider that which follows.

2. For

2. For in the second place, he is as faithful as he is able, faithful to use the fulness of his sufficiency for the ends and uses for which he received it. *He is faithful to him that appointed him, in all his house*, Heb. 3. 2. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 24. *All*, saith our Saviour, *that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, *John* 6. 37. When he was leaving the World, he could with all confidence say unto his Father, *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, *Joh.* 17. And if he did thus in the day of his humiliation and temptation, it cannot be thought but that he will likewise finish what the Father hath given him to do now in the day of his exaltation and power. Why do the holy Angels sing, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength?* but because he faithfully useth them for those noble and worthy ends for which he received them. *Rev.* 5. *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive,*

tive, and received gifts for men, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.*68.18. he then *gave gifts unto men*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 4.10. When upon his glorious exaltation he had received the promise of the Father, to wit, the power of sending the Holy Ghost, he presently pours it out upon his Disciples, *Acts* 2.33. what he receives for us, he will be sure to communicate to us. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth*, saith the Wise man, *Eccles.*11.3. for that is the end of their being so filled, to supply the necessities of the inhabitants of the earth. They indeed do thus by a natural necessity; but our Saviour out of his fulness supplies the spiritual wants of men spontaneously. Never was the kindest Mother more willing that her full brests should be drawn by her tender Infant, than our blessed Saviour is that we should draw and derive from his fulness to the relief and supply of all our spiritual wants to make us good and happy.

To think or to ſuſpect that our Saviour ſhould with-hold any of that *aid* from men which he hath received for them, and which is neceſſary to enable them to perform the condition of the promiſe, ſuppoſing them capable of it, would be highly to diſhonour him. It is a grievous thing among men, to with-hold from the people, that which their extream neceſſity calls for, when it is in ones power to relieve them without injury to himſelf or to his, or to the publick. *He that with-holdeth corn, the people ſhall curſe him*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 26. The reverence which we owe to our bleſſed Saviour, and the aſſurance we have of his goodneſs and good will towards men, will not ſuffer us once to think there is in him any thing of like nature. And if he himſelf threatned that unprofitable ſervant in the Goſpel as he did, for not uſing the talent committed to him, to the end and purpoſe for which he received it, we may be ſure he himſelf will be very far from not diſcharging the truſt he hath received from his Father. 3. We

3. We have no reason to fear or to doubt but that that compassion and love towards us, and the longing desire our Saviour had after our salvation, which made him willing to suffer so much as he hath, to obtain a conditional pardon for us, and a conditional promise of it, doth and will make him willing to *assist* all those in the performance of that condition, who have not, or do not make themselves uncapable of it, by not using, but opposing such preparatory aids as have been afforded them. He who hath laid so costly a foundation in his own bloud, to make us good and happy, cannot, as we may well think, be wanting to build upon that foundation what is necessary on his part to compleat his design of grace and favour towards us. We cannot think he will be willing to lose all the cost he hath already expended towards the procuring of pardon and life for us, for want of doing that further for us, which he can with far more ease do, (if we have not made ourselves uncapable of it) than what he hath done already. Hath

Hath our blessed Saviour any thing to give us which is better than himself, or more dear to him? And if not, as doubtless he hath not, then we may confidently conclude, that that which put him upon giving himself for us, will not suffer him to keep back from us that which he can give us without any detriment to himself, or disparagement to his wisdom, unless we have made our selves uncapable of it. As S. *Paul* saith of God the Father, he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? so we may say of God the Son; he that spared not himself when we stood in need of a Saviour, but gave himself to death for us; how shall he not give us that also, which though it be less for him to give, yet is such which in some sort we stand in as much need of as we did of a Saviour, his assistance I mean. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*, as the Apostle inferrs,

Rom.

"*Rom.* 5. 10. If meerly by Christs dying "for our sins, we were thus far resto- "red to Gods favour, as that he was "pleased to propose to us free and easie "conditions of mercy and pardon; "much more easie will it be, and most "agreeable to that former essay of his "goodness, now he hath gone so far "with us, to bestow on us also ability to "perform those conditions (unless we have made our selves uncapable of it) since without such assistance, all the rest would signifie no more to us, than as if Christ had never died for us, nor than as if such conditions had never been obtained for us, or propo- sed to us.

4. That plenitude of power and sufficiency lodged in our Saviour, to answer and to supply all the spiritual wants and necessities of men, on whose behalf our Saviour took on him the great office of Mediator, will never turn to such an account of glory, ho- nour, and praise to God the Father of all mercies, while it is restrained and

kept

kept back onely within himself, as it will when communicated and given forth in the effects of it, to them for whose benefit he received it: nor will it till then neither redound so much to his own honour as God the Father designed it should. And if not, how can we possibly think there should be any thing of unwillingness in him to afford all those his assistance to perform the condition of the promise, who do not refuse to make use of it?

For as it was the design of our Saviour in all the good he did to men while he was in the World, to gain glory thereby unto his Father, so it was a great inducement to him to do that good, when he knew it would turn to such an account. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, *John* 14. 13. It was matter of great satisfaction to our Saviour when he was upon leaving the World, that he could say to his Father,

I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. *John* 17. 4. he took pleasure in doing that work for that reason, because he glorified the Father thereby. And we cannot think he is less zealous for the honour of his Father now he is so highly exalted by him, than he was in the day of his humiliation and temptation.

Considering then that our Saviours assisting us to perform the condition of the promise, will in several respects bring in a great revenue of glory to God, as well as it will of good to men, we may be confident that he will rather be grieved for that men are no more forward to make use of his assistance, than any way backward to afford it them.

S. *Paul* thought it a prevailing argument to obtain a liberal contribution for the relief of fellow-Christians, when he could say, it would both *supply the necessities of the Saints, and cause many*

many thanksgivings unto God, 2 *Cor.* 9. 12. Now our Saviours assisting men to perform the condition of the promise, will not onely make *them* happy, but will also fill their hearts and mouths with many and many thanksgivings unto God, for his grace bestowed on them by Jesus Christ. And if so, we cannot doubt of our Saviours willingness to assist all those who are any whit willing to be assisted. Charity in good men will make them willing to engage in such an action as will both relieve men, and procure many thanksgivings unto God, though they do thereby to a degree empty themselves, and diminish of their own store. How much more then will that goodness in our Saviour, which is infinitely greater, dispose him to yield us his assistance to become good in performing the condition of the promise, when he shall thereby both glorifie his Father, and make us happy, and procure to himself the satisfaction of doing all this good, and everlasting love and praise from those that are

made happy by it; and all this too without any more diminishing of his own riches, than when by a word of his mouth he healed the diseased bodies of men.

5. The pleasure which our Saviour takes in mens becoming good, as they do by performing the condition of the promise, is a ground of great assurance, that nothing shall be wanting on his part, fully to assist them to perform that condition, that will consist with his wisdom and with the terms on which the Father will have men to be so assisted. The Prophet speaking of the Messiah, saith, *He shall see his seed, and he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. Isa.* 53. To see the fruit of his Mediatory performance in mens being recovered from being bad to become good, from Rebels to become obedient Subjects, yea dutiful children to his Father, and so heirs of salvation, is and needs must be matter of great satisfaction to the soul of our Saviour, because it is the very prize for which he

he ran, the design of his whole undertaking, as Mediatour. And therefore he cannot possibly be wanting in any thing that is but fit for him to do to help men to become good, or to perform the condition of the promise, which is the same. We see by his weeping over Jerusalem, how he is grieved when men refuse to make use of those helps and means of deliverance which he hath obtained for them at a costly rate; when they refuse to be holpen out of the pit of destruction, when help is offered them. By which we may easily judge how acceptable it is to him to help and assist them to get out of a sinful state, who have any mind to be so assisted by him.

These considerations are enough and sufficient, I conceive, to satisfie us touching our Saviours willingness to assist those to perform the condition of the promise, who do not remain unwilling to be so assisted by him, after what God has been doing in their souls to make them willing: and greatly tend likewise

wise to strengthen their faith in Christ, and to encourage their dependence upon him for all necessary supplies of assistance and grace, who have any mind to become good, or to increase in goodness, and to put forth their endeavours to that end.

THE END.

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A DISCOURSE OF Divine Assistance, AND THE METHOD thereof:

Shewing what Assistance Men receive from God in performing the Condition of the Promise of pardon of Sin and Eternal Life.

By *William Allen*

Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Mat. 13. 12. *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.*

LONDON,
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Evangelical assistances, and of all Gospel-grace, is committed to the Son; but yet so as that the Father gives this by the Son, as the Son also does by the Holy Ghost.

For the better understanding of this matter we must know, that after our Saviours humiliation, came his exaltation by the Father, who gave unto him as Mediatour God-man, a Kingdom glory and greatness, all power in Heaven and Earth, *he gave all things into his hands, Joh.*3.35. *committed all judgment to the Son, Joh.*5.22. The Father committed to the Son the whole Evangelical Oeconomy, the power of managing all affairs belonging to the being and well-being of the Church which he had purchased with his own bloud, over which he made him head; yea, head also over all things to the Church; for he made him Prince of the Kings of the Earth, the onely Potentate, as the Scripture speaks.

This

This authority and power is ſaid to be given to Chriſt, *becauſe he is the Son of man*, *John* 5. 27. that is, I conceive, becauſe he is the Meſſiah, to whom ſuch a Kingdom and Regal power was promiſed and foretold in the Prophets, under that denomination of the *Son of Man*. Thus *Daniel* ſaw in a Viſion *one like the Son of man, to whom the ancient of days gave dominion, glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages might ſerve him*, *Dan.* 7.13,14. And *Son of Man* is the appellation which our Saviour as the Meſſiah, doth frequently give unto himſelf, as is recorded in the Evangelical Hiſtory, and which S. *John* in his Book of *Revelations*, doth alſo more than once give him. And *Iſaias* foretold concerning *a child that ſhould be born, that the Government ſhould be upon his ſhoulders, upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom to order and eſtabliſh it for ever*, *chap.*9.6,7. To which agrees that of the Angel to the Mother of our Lord, *Luke* 1. 33,34. *The Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne*

of his father David, and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no end. All agreeing that this Kingdom, Government and Power, ſhould be adminiſtred by the Son of God in humane nature, and becauſe he is the Son of Man.

Now in this gift of the Father, the giving ſuch to his Son as he had prepared to become his Diſciples, and to be made ſo by him, is included; they are part of the *all* things which the Father hath put into his hand. In giving him a Kingdom, he gives him a people to be his Subjects, whoſe good behaviour, and whoſe happineſs he is to provide for, and to promote by his ſpiritual Government. When the Prophet had ſpoken of Gods ſetting his Son upon his holy hill of *Zion*, *Pſal.* 2.6. in *verſe* 8. he brings in God ſpeaking thus to him; *Ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* Theſe are prepared by the Father to become Subjects

jects to the Son then when he gives them to him; but are actually made ſubject to his Spiritual Government by the Son himſelf, by his *going forth conquering and to conquer* by his Goſpel; it *is by his arrows the people fall under him.*

Now the Fathers thus committing to his Son the power of managing all matters that concern the forming and perfecting one Chriſtian Church throughout the World, and ſo of diſpenſing all aids and aſſiſtances to that end, doth not imply or ſuppoſe the Fathers relinquiſhing this power, but his doing all by his Son, as deſigning to intereſs the Man Chriſt Jeſus in all theſe great affairs. And thus when the Father ſends the Holy Spirit, by whoſe influences we receive our aſſiſtances, he then ſends him in the name of the Son, as being concerned with him in ſuch ſending; *John* 14.26. *The Comforter which is the Holy Ghoſt whom the Father will ſend in my name*, ſaith our Saviour. And on the other hand,

hand, the Son when he ſends the Holy Spirit, he ſends him as from the Father who is always concerned alſo in ſuch ſending, *John* 15. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtifie of me.*

But as I ſay, the Father diſpenſeth the influences and aſſiſtances of the Spirit *by the Son*, as God-man, now in the time of this Kingdom of his which the Father hath given him. S. *Paul* ſpeaking of Gods ſaving us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which ſaith he, he ſhed on us abundantly, *through* Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, *Tit.* 3. 6. I thank my God always on your behalf, for *the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; that in every thing ye are enriched by him*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 4, 5. And becauſe theſe aids are thus diſpenſed by the Son, though from the Father, and by the Holy Ghoſt, they are called *the ſupplies of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.*

*Phil.*1.19. *And it is God that ſupplies all our need, according to his riches in glory*, but it is *by Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.* 4. 19. And the Holy Spirit is ſtiled the *Spirit of the Son*, even then when he is ſent into our hearts by the Father, for the reaſon aforeſaid, *Gal.* 4. 6. And ſo for the gifts and graces of the Spirit, they are all diſpenſed by Jeſus Chriſt. *To every one of us* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt. Epheſ.*4.7.

All this I have noted, that we might the better underſtand for what reaſon and in what reſpect thoſe prepared to receive the Faith of the Goſpel, are ſaid to be given by the Father to the Son to work that faith in them: and it is becauſe in giving him the Mediatory Kingdom, he gives him the power of diſpenſing all thoſe aids and aſſiſtances, by which men are made true and ſincere Chriſtians.

But to proceed yet a little further in this matter, the uſe of which, as to the prin-

principal ſcope of this Chapter, will be better diſcerned afterward: the reaſon why the Father confers this Regal dignity and authority upon the Son, and the power of ſending the Spirit, and of diſpenſing aids and gifts, is not onely that *all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, which yet is one reaſon of it, *John* 5. 23. Nor yet onely as a reward of his deep humiliation, ſuffering, and obedience unto death, which is another, *Phil.*2.9,10. but alſo that Gods great deſign of reforming the World by ſending his Son into it, and of converting ſinners to the faith and obedience of the Goſpel, might by that means be facilitated, as tending to render Chriſt the more glorious, and the more attractive an object of Faith. It is by his being thus exalted, that men are more eſpecially brought to believe in him. It is *by him that we do believe in God that raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory that our faith and hope might be in God*, 1 *Pet.*1.21. So that we ſee this glorious advancement of

of Chriſt, hath the nature of an *aid* in it to help us to believe.

The meanneſs of our Saviours appearance in the World while he was in it, and his crucifixion at the laſt, was that which prejudiced men againſt both him and his doctrine; it was their ſtumbling block, and that at which they were offended, and all through a miſtake of the nature of Chriſts Kingdom and Government; ſo that he had but very few Diſciples at laſt, notwithſtanding all his mighty miracles and gracious words. But when he was raiſed from the dead, and exalted in his kingdom and glory, and had given a powerful demonſtration of it by ſending the Holy Ghoſt, as he had promiſed he would, to enable thoſe that preached in his name, and thoſe that believed in his name, to do ſo many wonderful things in his name as they did: this proof of his exaltation, in a ſhort time filled a great part of the World with Diſciples to him, and made men flock by multitudes into his Church and Kingdom. This

This effect of his glorious exaltation, was foretold by the Prophets. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power, more than the womb of the morning*, according to the marginal reading, *Pſal.* 110. 3. Theſe words, *more than the womb of the morning*, ſeem to be hyperbolical, to ſhew the vaſt numbers of Diſciples and Subjects, the day of Chriſts power and glorious exaltation, ſhould procure him, even like the drops of the morning-dew for multitude. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaking as it were to the Meſſiah, of whom he propheſied, ſaid, *Nations that knew thee not ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Iſrael, for he hath glorified thee, Iſa.* 55.5. That is the reaſon we ſee of the Nations running in unto him; it is becauſe Almighty God hath *glorified* him, *exalted, extolled, and made him very high*, as the ſame Prophet ſpeaks, *chap.* 52.13.

When men perceived that the God of Heaven ſo far approved of what Chriſt

Chriſt had taught, done, and ſuffered in the World, as to reward him for it with ſuch power and glory, this procured from them a belief of his doctrine, and put a great reputation upon it: it raiſed in men alſo a great expectation from him as from one that was very well able to prefer and reward his friends and followers, as he had promiſed he would.

We find that the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, the pouring out of the Spirit in thoſe greater meaſures foretold by the Prophets, was deferred unto this time of the glorious exaltation of Chriſt. So ſaith the Evangeliſt S. *John* 7.39. *The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.* And the reaſon hereof was, that he might have the honour of ſending him, and of diſpenſing the aſſiſtances and manifold gifts of the Spirit, and thereby convince men that he was the ſame which he always declared himſelf to be, the Son of God ſent down from Heaven. *If I go not away the Comforter will*

will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he ſhall convince the World of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father and ye ſee me no more. John 16. 7, 8, 10. Convince the World of righteouſneſs, that is, he ſhould convince them that Chriſt was no deceiver, as they accuſed him to be here on Earth, but the true Meſſiah, Son of God and Saviour of the World, as he had declared himſelf to be while he was here in the World. And this our Saviour ſays the Holy Ghoſt ſhould convince the World of, becauſe of his going to the Father: that is, by the Fathers receiving him up into glory after his reſurrection and placing him there in royal Majeſty. This our Saviour ſays the Spirit ſhould convince the World of when he was come from him; and the event plainly declares how.

For within a few days after our Saviours aſcenſion into Heaven, and his enthronation there, he ſends down the Holy Ghoſt upon his Apoſtles that preached

preached in his name and were his witneſs, and upon others alſo that believed in his name, enabling them by the Holy Ghoſt to ſpeak and do ſuch things, as by hearing and ſeeing of which, great multitudes were preſently convinced that Jeſus was the Chriſt, the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the World, about three thouſand of them being baptized into this Faith the very ſame day in which the Holy Ghoſt was thus ſent by Chriſt.

For S. *Peter* diſcourſed to them of this wonderful event thus, *Acts* 2. 32, 33. *This Jeſus* (of whom he had been ſpeaking) *hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear.* The end and deſign of all which, was to convince men that Jeſus is the Chriſt of God; which was done by convincing them that God had thus exalted him and given this

power of doing these wonders by the Spirit he had sent. For that is the use S. *Peter* drew it to, *Verse* 36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Now this sending of the Holy Ghost was so necessary to qualifie the Apostles for the great work of converting the World by preaching Christ and his doctrine, and for the procuring credit to be given to it, that our Saviour would not have them so much as set upon it, or go about it, *but commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with this power from on high*, *Luke* 24. 49. And the preaching of the Gospel under this qualification, was doubtless the preaching it *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, which S. *Paul* speaks of 1 *Cor.* 2. 4.

Now by this we see how those assistances which men receive in believing, and

and ſo in performing the condition of the promiſe, do depend upon the Fathers giving all things into the hands of the Son: and how for that reaſon the Father gives ſuch as have been preparatively aſſiſted by him, unto the Son to be compleatly aſſiſted to perform the condition of the promiſe. And indeed the reaſon why ſo many turned to God in ſo little a time after Chriſts exaltation, than ever was known before, was becauſe thoſe aſſiſtances then diſpenſed by him, were more and greater than ever were vouchſafed the World before.

And leſt any ſhould be diſcouraged, or think their condition worſe than indeed it is, for that we have no ſuch external aſſiſtances by the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, as men in thoſe primitive times had, let this one thing be conſidered; That the Chriſtians now are as really aſſiſted by that ſending of the Holy Ghoſt which was in thoſe times, as thoſe were who lived then; ſuppoſing the truth of the Hi-

story of it, of which there is no cause to doubt. For we have the same Gospel as they had, and that under the same evidence by which it was demonstrated to them to be from Heaven, and that the then glorified Jesus was the author of it. And we may as truly be said to have Christ and his Apostles now in respect of external assistance, as the Jews in those times were to have *Moses* and the Prophets. For we have the same doctrine which Christ and his Apostles preached, and many of the same miracles which they wrought to confirm it, transmitted down to us by their writings and unquestionable tradition; and the Jews had *Moses* and the Prophets no otherwise in our Saviours time, when he said they had *Moses* and the Prophets. The miracles of the Apostles then, wrought the same effect, procured the same belief of their doctrine, in many that onely heard of them by credible testimony, as they did in them that saw them done. We see our Saviour upbraided his Disciples for not believing

ving matter of Fact, when teſtified to them by credible eye-witneſſes. *Mark* 16. 14. *And he ſaid to Thomas, bleſſed are they which have not ſeen, and yet have believed.* And when S. *John* had written a Hiſtory of ſome of the ſigns or miracles which our Saviour did, he ſays, *theſe are written that men might believe*, *John* 20. 30, 31. By this he ſuppoſed his written teſtimony of what he had ſeen and heard, to be a competent ground of faith in others. and S. *Paul* ſaith, *Hold faſt the tradition which ye have been tanght, whether by word or our Epiſtle*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2.15.

But although it is not neceſſary that the ſame miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, ſhould be repeated in every Age, to convince men that Chriſt, who was firſt crucified, is now advanced to the throne of his glory, and hath the power of ſending the Holy Ghoſt to confirm the doctrine which was preached in his name by them who proved their miſſion from

him by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds which were done in his name: though, as I say, the repetition of these be not necessary in every Age, this having been done *once for all* in one Age, as S. *Jude* speaks of the Faith *once delivered to the Saints*; yet the inward assistance by the Spirit, to cause the external assistances to operate the more effectually upon the mind, is still necessary, and is still continued in the Church. For in this respect our Saviour by his Spirit as well as by his word, is with his people always to the end of the World, as he promised he would, and as he promised his Spirit likewise should. *I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.* *John* 14.16. It was this presence of Christ, I conceive, which S. *Paul* desired might be and continue with *Timothies* Spirit, 2 *Tim.*4.22. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit.*

In this part of my Discourse concerning

cerning Divine Assistance, I have endeavoured to shew, that our Lord and Saviour hath the power of dispensing Evangelical and Spiritual Assistances committed to him by the Father, and that that is the reason why the Father is said to give such to the Son as have heard and learned of the Father. And now this high advancement of the Son, and his having all power in Heaven and Earth given to him, leaves no place for us to doubt of his ability to assist those to the uttermost, who do not make themselves uncapable of it, by refusing to make use of it, and of the Fathers preparatory assistance. And truly all such have no more reason neither to doubt of our Saviours willingness to assist them, than they have of his power, if these few things following be but duly considered.

1. That Kingdom, Glory, and Greatness forementioned, and the power of dispensing aids and assistances is given by the Father to the Son for this very end among others, that he might use

and manage all for the bringing men, such as the Father hath given him, to perform the condition of the promise, in repenting, in believing, and obeying the Gospel, *Acts* 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* The father advanced him to that high honour and dignity, that he might be a publick good to mankind, in assisting them to perform the condition of the promise, as he had been before by his humiliation for the obtaining of the promise upon that condition, that so he might be a compleat Saviour in saving us as well from sin in the power and pollution of it, as from the guilt of it. *He ascended far above all Heavens, that he might fill* or fulfil *all things*, *Ephes.* 4.10. That he might fully dispence and bestow whatever is necessary to the perfecting of the Saints and edification of the body of Christ. The Apostle having said in *chap.* 1. 20, 21. *that God having raised Christ from the dead, set him at his own right hand in*

the

the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not onely in this World, but alſo in that which is to come; and having put all things under his feet; then in Verſe 22, and 23. he ſays, *he gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.* He did not onely give him to be the Head of his Church, but to be Head over all things to the Church, to the uſe and benefit of the Church; for the fulneſs of this power of his in the iſſue and benefit of it, runs in to his Church for whom he received it, and in reſpect whereof, the Church is his fulneſs in a paſſive ſenſe: for it is he *that filleth all in all*, as S. *John* ſaith, *of his fulneſs we have all received, and grace for grace*, *John* 1.16. ſuch a fulneſs as holds ſome proportion with the fulneſs of ſuch a head: all the fulneſs wherewith all and every one of his Church are filled, is derived from him, it is all of his filling, and that as he is Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church.

For

For he is not onely a political Head to the Church to govern it by Laws, but ſuch a Head alſo as reſembles a natural head by way of influence, conveying by his Spirit a vital and quickning power unto all the members, to enable them to obey thoſe Laws. The whole body hath *from this head nouriſhment miniſtred*, as S. *Paul* ſhews *Col.* 2. 19. Upon which account S. *Paul* could ſay, *I am able to do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me. But without him* (as our Saviour told his Diſciples) *ye can do nothing.*

Now if all this fulneſs, all this power we have been ſpeaking of, was given to the Son, was put into his hands for that end that he ſhould uſe it, and manage it in aiding and aſſiſting thoſe whom the Father hath given him, to perform the condition on which pardon and eternal life are promiſed, there is no queſtion to be made of his willingneſs to uſe it to that end, eſpecially when we further conſider that which follows.

2. For

2. For in the second place, he is as faithful as he is able, faithful to use the fulness of his sufficiency for the ends and uses for which he received it. *He is faithful to him that appointed him, in all his house*, Heb. 3. 2. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 24. *All*, saith our Saviour, *that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, *John* 6. 37. When he was leaving the World, he could with all confidence say unto his Father, *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, *Joh.* 17. And if he did thus in the day of his humiliation and temptation, it cannot be thought but that he will likewise finish what the Father hath given him to do now in the day of his exaltation and power. Why do the holy Angels sing, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength?* but because he faithfully useth them for those noble and worthy ends for which he received them. *Rev.* 5. *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive,*

tive, and received gifts for men, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.*68.18. he then *gave gifts unto men*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 4.10. When upon his glorious exaltation he had received the promise of the Father, to wit, the power of sending the Holy Ghost, he presently pours it out upon his Disciples, *Acts* 2.33. what he receives for us, he will be sure to communicate to us. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth*, saith the Wise man, *Eccles.*11.3. for that is the end of their being so filled, to supply the necessities of the inhabitants of the earth. They indeed do thus by a natural neeessity; but our Saviour out of his fulness supplies the spiritual wants of men spontaneously. Never was the kindest Mother more willing that her full brests should be drawn by her tender Infant, than our blessed Saviour is that we should draw and derive from his fulness to the relief and supply of all our spiritual wants to make us good and happy.

To think or to ſuſpect that our Saviour ſhould with-hold any of that *aid* from men which he hath received for them, and which is neceſſary to enable them to perform the condition of the promiſe, ſuppoſing them capable of it, would be highly to diſhonour him. It is a grievous thing among men, to with-hold from the people, that which their extream neceſſity calls for, when it is in ones power to relieve them without injury to himſelf or to his, or to the publick. *He that with-holdeth corn, the people ſhall curſe him*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 26. The reverence which we owe to our bleſſed Saviour, and the aſſurance we have of his goodneſs and good will towards men, will not ſuffer us once to think there is in him any thing of like nature. And if he himſelf threatned that unprofitable ſervant in the Goſpel as he did, for not uſing the talent committed to him, to the end and purpoſe for which he received it, we may be ſure he himſelf will be very far from not diſcharging the truſt he hath received from his Father.

3. We

3. We have no reason to fear or to doubt but that that compassion and love towards us, and the longing desire our Saviour had after our salvation, which made him willing to suffer so much as he hath, to obtain a conditional pardon for us, and a conditional promise of it, doth and will make him willing to *assist* all those in the performance of that condition, who have not, or do not make themselves uncapable of it, by not using, but opposing such preparatory aids as have been afforded them. He who hath laid so costly a foundation in his own bloud, to make us good and happy, cannot, as we may well think, be wanting to build upon that foundation what is necessary on his part to compleat his design of grace and favour towards us. We cannot think he will be willing to lose all the cost he hath already expended towards the procuring of pardon and life for us, for want of doing that further for us, which he can with far more ease do, (if we have not made ourselves uncapable of it) than what he hath done already. Hath

Hath our bleſſed Saviour any thing to give us which is better than himſelf, or more dear to him? And if not, as doubtleſs he hath not, then we may confidently conclude, that that which put him upon giving himſelf for us, will not ſuffer him to keep back from us that which he can give us without any detriment to himſelf, or diſparagement to his wiſdom, unleſs we have made our ſelves uncapable of it. As S. *Paul* ſaith of God the Father, he that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things? ſo we may ſay of God the Son; he that ſpared not himſelf when we ſtood in need of a Saviour, but gave himſelf to death for us; how ſhall he not give us that alſo, which though it be leſs for him to give, yet is ſuch which in ſome ſort we ſtand in as much need of as we did of a Saviour, his aſſiſtance I mean. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life*, as the Apoſtle inferrs,

Rom.

"*Rom.* 5.10. If meerly by Christs dying "for our sins, we were thus far resto- "red to Gods favour, as that he was "pleased to propose to us free and easie "conditions of mercy and pardon; "much more easie will it be, and most "agreeable to that former essay of his "goodness, now he hath gone so far "with us, to bestow on us also ability to "perform those conditions (unless we have made our selves uncapable of it) since without such assistance, all the rest would signifie no more to us, than as if Christ had never died for us, nor than as if such conditions had never been obtained for us, or propo- sed to us.

4. That plenitude of power and sufficiency lodged in our Saviour, to answer and to supply all the spiritual wants and necessities of men, on whose behalf our Saviour took on him the great office of Mediator, will never turn to such an account of glory, ho- nour, and praise to God the Father of all mercies, while it is restrained and kept

kept back onely within himſelf, as it will when communicated and given forth in the effects of it, to them for whoſe benefit he received it: nor will it till then neither redound ſo much to his own honour as God the Father deſigned it ſhould. And if not, how can we poſſibly think there ſhould be any thing of unwillingneſs in him to afford all thoſe his aſſiſtance to perform the condition of the promiſe, who do not refuſe to make uſe of it?

For as it was the deſign of our Saviour in all the good he did to men while he was in the World, to gain glory thereby unto his Father, ſo it was a great inducement to him to do that good, when he knew it would turn to ſuch an account. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, *John* 14. 13. It was matter of great ſatisfaction to our Saviour when he was upon leaving the World, that he could ſay to his Father,

I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. *John* 17. 4. he took pleasure in doing that work for that reason, because he glorified the Father thereby. And we cannot think he is less zealous for the honour of his Father now he is so highly exalted by him, than he was in the day of his humiliation and temptation.

Considering then that our Saviours assisting us to perform the condition of the promise, will in several respects bring in a great revenue of glory to God, as well as it will of good to men, we may be confident that he will rather be grieved for that men are no more forward to make use of his assistance, than any way backward to afford it them.

S. *Paul* thought it a prevailing argument to obtain a liberal contribution for the relief of fellow-Christians, when he could say, it would both *supply the necessities of the Saints, and cause many*

many thanksgivings unto God, 2 *Cor.* 9. 12. Now our Saviours assisting men to perform the condition of the promise, will not onely make *them* happy, but will also fill their hearts and mouths with many and many thanksgivings unto God, for his grace bestowed on them by Jesus Christ. And if so, we cannot doubt of our Saviours willingness to assist all those who are any whit willing to be assisted. Charity in good men will make them willing to engage in such an action as will both relieve men, and procure many thanksgivings unto God, though they do thereby to a degree empty themselves, and diminish of their own store. How much more then will that goodness in our Saviour, which is infinitely greater, dispose him to yield us his assistance to become good in performing the condition of the promise, when he shall thereby both glorifie his Father, and make us happy, and procure to himself the satisfaction of doing all this good, and everlasting love and praise from those that are

made happy by it; and all this too without any more diminishing of his own riches, than when by a word of his mouth he healed the diseased bodies of men.

5. The pleasure which our Saviour takes in mens becoming good, as they do by performing the condition of the promise, is a ground of great assurance, that nothing shall be wanting on his part, fully to assist them to perform that condition, that will consist with his wisdom and with the terms on which the Father will have men to be so assisted. The Prophet speaking of the Messiah, saith; *He shall see his seed, and he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. Isa.* 53. To see the fruit of his Mediatory performance in mens being recovered from being bad to become good, from Rebels to become obedient Subjects, yea dutiful children to his Father, and so heirs of salvation, is and needs must be matter of great satisfaction to the soul of our Saviour, because it is the very prize for which he

he ran, the design of his whole undertaking, as Mediatour. And therefore he cannot possibly be wanting in any thing that is but fit for him to do to help men to become good, or to perform the condition of the promise, which is the same. We see by his weeping over Jerusalem, how he is grieved when men refuse to make use of those helps and means of deliverance which he hath obtained for them at a costly rate; when they refuse to be holpen out of the pit of destruction, when help is offered them. By which we may easily judge how acceptable it is to him to help and assist them to get out of a sinful state, who have any mind to be so assisted by him.

These considerations are enough and sufficient, I conceive, to satisfie us touching our Saviours willingness to assist those to perform the condition of the promise, who do not remain unwilling to be so assisted by him, after what God has been doing in their souls to make them willing: and greatly tend likewise

wise to strengthen their faith in Christ, and to encourage their dependence upon him for all necessary supplies of assistance and grace, who have any mind to become good, or to increase in goodness, and to put forth their endeavours to that end.

THE END.

Books ſold by *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Biſhops-head* in S. *Pauls* Church-yard.

SHerlocks Diſcourſe of the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and our Union and Communion with him, &c. *To which is annexed a Defence and Continuation; with a particular reſpect to the Doctrine of the Church of* England, *and the Charge of* Socinianiſm *and* Pelagianiſm, *in* Oct.

Hotchkis's *Diſcourſe concerning the Imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs to us, and our Sins to him*, &c. *in two Parts, in* Oct.

Allens *Anſwer to* Ferguſſon, *about Juſtification, in* Octav.

——*His Myſtery of Iniquity unfolded*, &c. *in* Oct.

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Hallywels *Account of Familiſm againſt the Quakers, in* Oct.

—*His Diſcourſe of the Excellency of Chriſtianity, in* Oct.

—*His Sacred Method of ſaving Humane Souls by Jeſus Chriſt, in* Oct.

Needhams *Six Sermons moſt of them preached at St.* Maries *in* Cambridge. *in* Oct.

Worthingtons *Diſcourſe of Self-Reſignation, in* Oct.